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B.A. (Hons) Sports Communications and Marketing

Celebrity Influence: Analysing Millennial and Gen Z Responses to Celebrity Endorsement

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Date: 2024

A project submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the B.A. Degree with Honours in 'Sports Communications and Marketing.'

Abstract

This dissertation investigates Millennial and Gen Z responses to celebrity endorsement, with a focus on understanding generational differences in consumer attitudes and preferences. The study reveals that trustworthiness emerges as the most important quality for both generations, though younger consumers (18-25) place a higher significance on a celebrity's relatability and perceived product use. Instagram is identified as the primary platform where these demographics encounter celebrity endorsements. The research also found that while younger consumers, especially young women, are more likely to consider switching brands based on a successful endorsement, older demographics are less influenced. These findings highlight the need for marketers to tailor celebrity endorsement strategies to resonate meaningfully with each generation, emphasizing authenticity, relatability, and relevant platforms for optimal impact.

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1. Background

Celebrity endorsements have been long employed by companies as a persuasive marketing tool, balancing the beneficial and useful associations of well-known figures to ultimately drive sales and enhance the desired brand perception (Bergkvist and Zhou, 2016). However, the use of well-known celebrities to promote certain products is not a particularly new occurrence, the phenomenon of selling products via a celebrity or well-known person can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. *Vin Mariani* (a strong mixture of cocaine and wine) was endorsed by well-known figures such as Thomas Edison and Pope Leo XIII, whose images were transposed onto posters for the potent drink (Keel and Nataraajan, 2012). Celebrity endorsement as a concept is openly used by many marketers all around the world to catch the attention of potential consumers, aiming to positively affect their purchase intentions and ideally their attitude towards the brand (Pradhan et al, 2016).

However, the invention of social media and the increase in 'digital-native' generations (Prensky, 2001) have undoubtedly moulded and modified the effects of celebrity influence. These two generations, known as 'Millennials' and 'Gen Z' are individuals born between 1981 and 2010 (Williams, 2015). These demographics have benefited from having access to the Internet for most of their lives and will struggle to recall a time before the Internet (Twenge, 2017). The result of this change, and the immersion of younger generations consuming user-generated content, has shown a clear push from these generations towards certain traits such as authenticity (WEF, 2021), straying from other traits such as attractiveness, and style.

Celebrity endorsement has been linked to an increase in factors such as sales revenue and brand recognition (Bradic, 2015; Elberse and Verleun, 2012), it is also known to increase and develop brand equity (Till, 1998). Through the association of these positive results, celebrity endorsement is clearly a

powerful tool which modern marketers would be best in using, in order to enhance such factors as sales revenue and brand recognition. However, Bailey (2007) points out the inherent risk of using a celebrity to endorse a brand; the risk of scandal involving the endorser affecting the carefully sculpted desired brand image. This is particularly risky when it comes to 'digital-native' generations, as they have been shown to be more self-sufficient when making purchase decisions, relying on their own research to shape their behaviour; rather than relying on experts (Schwieger and Ladwig, 2018). As well as this, these generations have a cultural reputation of being more sensitive to outrage and more easily offended; meaning that the risk of a celebrity endorsement is even larger, and the need for a perfect-fit endorser is even greater.

1.2 Problem Statement

While there is a variety of research on the effects of celebrity endorsement, most of the research focuses on a pre-digital landscape. There is a lack of understanding of how Millennial and Gen Z consumers build connections to brands via celebrity endorsement in the digital age. Through the building of understanding towards these factors, it will ensure a more successful and effective approach to marketing strategy and implementation. While various studies have explored the effects of traits such as attractiveness and likeability within an endorser (e.g.Kahle and Homer, 1985; Friedman and Friedman, 1979), and others investigated the effect of relatability and familiarity (Amos et al, 2008); there is a lack of research on these particular traits in the context of modern-day micro-celebrities and social media influencers.

Continuing to implement outdated marketing strategies without the relevant research into changing attitudes among young consumers could have negative consequences for marketers across industries. In particular, the attributes that a celebrity endorser possesses which target the needs of Gen Z and

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Millennial consumers. With just 4% of respondents in a survey carried out by YouGov (2017) reporting to be swayed by a specific celebrity endorsement. The survey showed that 65% of the participants valued the treatment of workers over the celebrity used to promote a brand, with 57% of participants stating that their interest in a brand depends on the sustainability the brand displays. These changes surrounding what younger generations find appealing need to be researched in order to harness the power that they hold as one of the main demographic's marketers try to reach.

1.3 Aims and Objectives.

This research investigates how celebrity endorsements shape consumer behaviour, providing insights for organizations seeking marketing strategies tailored to Millennial and Gen Z consumers. By analysing how these generations respond to celebrity promotions on social media and other media channels, this study aims to help businesses understand the factors driving purchase decisions within this demographic. Understanding these influential dynamics will enable organizations to concentrate their celebrity endorsement strategies, potentially leading to a competitive advantage over their competitors, which may be using outdated strategies.

A list of objectives this study aims to investigate:

1. Identify three key characteristics Gen Z and Millennial consumers find most appealing in celebrity endorsers.

2. Determine if a celebrity endorsement can influence at least 10% of Gen Z and Millennial consumers to switch from their current favourite brand to a new brand.

3. Establish the most effective channel for a successful celebrity endorsement to be shared.

1.4 Research question

The following research will attempt to answer the question:

- How do Gen Z and Millennial consumers respond to celebrity endorsement?

2. Literature review

Celebrity endorsement is repeatedly and consistently used by marketers who try to incite people to buy or use the endorsed good or service by projecting a positive image and traits of a celebrity onto the brand (Atkin and Block, 1983). Celebrity endorsements have become one of the most widely employed advertising methods by businesses (Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell, 2000) showing significance when it comes to influence on consumer purchase decisions and brand attitudes. Studies have shown that people are more likely to choose a product when it is being endorsed by, or shown next to a celebrity endorser, versus a non-celebrity endorser (D'Ambrogio et Al., 2003). Given the increased use of celebrity endorsement to increase sales and strengthen the desired brand image, it is important to understand the significance of a potential endorser's perceived authenticity and likeability among other factors such as attractiveness and trustworthiness; and how these factors may differ depending on the industry and product type.

2.1 Understanding consumer behaviour

This section will cover the current models and theories regarding the factors which determine whether customers buy a product or service. While highlighting the process of decision making as defined by authors and scholars, and the possible limitations of each model.

According to Anderson and Golden (1984), consumer behaviour refers to the mental processes that customers go through when they determine their needs, wants, and the evaluation of a purchase as a solution to those needs. "The process whereby consumers determine if, which, what time, where the manner in which, as well as from whom to purchase goods and services" is how Walters (1974, p. 7) defines consumer behaviour. However, it is noted that varying consumers have differing characteristics and respond in different ways to certain stimuli (Bovi, 2009). Early economists, led by Nicholas Bernoulli, John von Neumann, and Oskar Morgenstern, began to study the foundation of consumer decision-making some three hundred years ago (Richarme, 2007).

During this early stage of conception, the topic of decision-making was approached from an economic perspective (Louden et al, 1993). These early approaches contributed to the development of the general concept developed by Jonathan Bentham in the 18th century (Bentham, 2007), 'utility' being the deciding factor in whether a customer purchases a product or service. Despite this, the 'economic man' model which was the general culmination of the early stages of consumer decision making has been criticised for ignoring the irrationality of human behaviour, and therefore consumer behaviour (Arnould et al, 2002). A criticism of neoclassical consumer economics is the rigidity in regard to the view that humans are primarily 'homo economicus' who are driven by rationality and selfishness, as seen in models such as the theory of rational choice (Hechter and Kanazawa, 1997) instead that there should be a psychological approach to complex human behaviour (Lecoutaux, G. 2016).

Following this, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) expanded on their initial research into the mental shortcuts, or 'heuristics' that lead to predictable biases in those who strive to be rational when making decisions in which Kahneman and Tversky (1974) identified three main heuristics that are relevant in decision making:

1.   Representativeness: People make superficial assumptions based on recent or dated events.

2.   Availability: People judge how likely an event is based on their ability to recall similar events.

3.   Anchoring: People heavily rely on the first piece of information they receive about a topic.

      (McDonough, 2024)

Using this research on bias regarding decision-making abilities, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) proposed prospect theory, which challenged the previous models of decision-making gathered during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries that were focused on rationality as the driving force for consumer decision-making. Prospect theory put forward the idea of loss aversion, wherein the potential losses of a decision were found to be more substantial within a consumer's mind than the possible gains from the purchase. They included the use of framing effects on consumers, according to this cognitive bias, participants' decisions would change if the same decision-making task were phrased in terms of gains or losses (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Prospect theory was effective in expanding the field of decision-making models of behaviour away from the thought of humans being fundamentally rational beings, and pointed out that human decision-making was affected when situations were presented as either a 'loss' or a 'gain'. However, due to the model focusing on risk-based decision-making, it fails to account for 'riskless' choices (Chung, 2019), leaving a gap open for more research to be undertaken.

Building further on decision making, Kahneman (2011) proposed that the human brain can be split into two systems when decision-making occurs. The first system operates by relying on quick associations, usually stemming from emotions and mental shortcuts. System two, Kahneman states is the logical and deliberate system which allows individuals to evaluate decisions clearly and rationally. Kahneman (2011) states that the two systems should be thought of as separate agents inside one brain – asserting that in certain situations it is imperative that the individual pays close attention to their rationality at the

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risk of failing or not performing well. When applying this model to the success of celebrity

endorsement, these two systems have enormous implications for marketers,

celebrity endorsements utilize the thinking of system one. Endorsements tap into emotional appeal as

well as visual cues, in certain circumstances it could be said that the celebrity's mere presence could

become more significant to the consumer than the actual product itself. An example of these

systems being used in a practical sense would be the Compare the Market adverts which are endorsed by

a fictional Meercat character; the character generates positive feelings due to its cuteness and humour,

appealing to the system one emotional based decision-making.

2.2 What is celebrity endorsement/The significance of it.

A celebrity is defined as a personality who possesses public notability and uses that notability for the

promotion of products, brands, or services (Jain and Roy, 2016). McKracken (1989) defines a celebrity

endorser as a famous individual who utilises public perception on behalf of a consumer good, which s/he

uses when appearing in an advertisement for said brand. The key factors of a celebrity endorsement

involve the extension of a famous personalities' notability, recognition, and high status to sell the

consumer good (Jain, Roy. 2016). Celebrities include well-known actors, models, athletes, and singers

(Friedman and Friedman, 1973). A person who gains notoriety on social media sites in the modern

digital age can be considered a celebrity, despite not being a celebrity in the traditional sense (Yang,

2018). Smart, B. (2005) notes that a sportsman or sportswoman's attributed celebrity status can lead

them to be featured in television appearances, magazine editorials and in the general press.

2.4 The effect of celebrity endorsement on customer attitudes

The key areas of interest with respect to the last 40 years of research on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement relative to the perception and success of a brand are based on three main models. These models are the source credibility model, and the source attractiveness model, as well as the Meaning Transfer Model (MTM).

The Meaning Transfer Model suggested by McKracken (1986) suggests a chain reaction, from which the culture and societal associations of the endorser are transferred to the brand/product. The associations are then transferred to the consumer's attitudes and styles through the 'virtue of possession' (Roy & Jain, 2016). However, there are limitations with this particular model when the prospect of negative associations becomes just as possible as positive associations. The Meaning Transfer Model proposed by McKracken (1986) suggests a chain reaction, from which the culture and societal associations are transferred to the brand/product, therefore transferring to the consumer's attitudes and styles through the 'virtue of possession' (Roy & Jain,). However, there are limitations with this particular model when the chance of negative associations forming becomes just as possible as positive associations.

The power of perceived positive endorser associations is substantiated by research carried out by Hofmann and Stokburger-Sauer (2017), advertisements with smiling endorsers featured in travel campaigns were more likely to evoke engagement and recommendation from tourists than non-smiling endorsers. This backs up the research by Amos et al (2008) who state that using a positive endorser in a campaign has a beneficial impact on the way consumers identify and embody an idea, which influences the persuasiveness of an ad.

Following on from positivity, a closely related endorser trait which has been investigated by researchers in relation to successful celebrity endorsement is model attractiveness. Some research indicates model attractiveness does not have a significant impact on the effectiveness of an advertising campaign (Eagly et al, 1991). Other research acknowledges the influence of the endorser trait of attractiveness but points to the contextual importance of using attractive models. With Lumpkin and Madden (1989) finding that an attractive endorser does *not* influence the sales of products such as soda or cheese. In the context of celebrity endorsement though, attractiveness may be more meaningful when selling beauty or clothing products than with a food product; as research indicates through the source attractiveness model (McGuire, 1968).

The majority of researchers have acknowledged the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement being due to the endorser's source credibility (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Credibility refers to "the extent to which the source is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject" (Goldsmith et al., 2000, p. 43). The endorser, in this case, a well-known public figure or celebrity, needs to be perceived as a credible source of information in order to be effective in creating and sustaining purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1990).

It is also noted that a credible endorser is potentially the most important factor in affecting the consumer's outlook on the brand agreeably therefore adding value to the company/product/brand overall. Though credibility and positivity are differing traits – the research on both is congruent with the Meaning Transfer Model proposed by McCracken (1986) which suggests that endorser traits 'transfer' to brand through endorsement. While these elements of the research regarding the source credibility model are congruent with the MTM, there were areas that the research was not able to account for, for example, why the effectiveness of certain celebrity endorsements using a specific celebrity prove to be

effective with one brand and not another. McCracken (1986) asserts that it is more than just 'simple' attractiveness or credibility; that rather it is a complicated and multidimensional package of meanings that must be symbolised by the celebrity endorser in order for the endorsement to be effective.

Building further on both source models; The Source Credibility Model (Hoveland, Janis, and Kelley 1953; Hoveland and Weiss 1951) and the Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire 1968), both source models attribute an endorsement's success to the 'source' (the endorser) being the anchor, and strength of the campaign. While the source credibility model attributes the messages' favourable result to traits such as expertise and trustworthiness associated with the endorser; the source attractiveness model attributes the success of the message to traits such as familiarity and likeability from the consumer towards the endorser.

Merging these two forces together, Haytko et al (2009) concluded that there is a 'continuum' in which it is ideal for the endorser to display both expertise and attractiveness, but to a varied degree. Haytko et al (2009) label this nuance as the 'endorser sexpertise continuum' This continuum leads to the assumption that an endorser will either lean towards the 'expertise' side, only endorsing products they are familiar with, or the 'attractiveness' side, endorsing products more loosely and unrelated to the endorser, since the 'attractiveness' traits such as familiarity and likeability transcend any need for expertise or credibility (Haytko et al, 2009).

2.6 Literature Review Conclusions

This literature review has explored the evolution of customer decision–making models, as well as highlighting the limitations found in the classical economic approach to them. The discussion outlined key theories such as prospect theory and Kahneman's dual–system framework, showing how

these models can highlight the role of bias and framing effects when it comes to consumer purchase decisions.

The main models which can be used to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, as well as its strengths and limitations are the following:

1. **The source credibility model:**

   While this model highlights the importance of endorser credibility and product expertise; it oversimplifies the complicated factors which influence consumer perceptions of brand-celebrity fit.

2. **The source attractiveness model**

   This model highlights the role of celebrity likeability and attractiveness, though it may lack the nuance required when it comes to the importance of authenticity when targeting certain demographics.

3. **The meaning transfer model**

   The most relevant to the topic of celebrity endorsements and their effects on culture and society, the MTM emphasises how cultural meaning is transferred from a celebrity to a brand and vice versa.

Overall, looking at the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement through each model (source credibility, source attractiveness, meaning transfer model) offers both strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical framework. The source credibility model highlights the importance of trustworthiness and product expertise as an endorser trait, explaining why companies who sell kitchenware usually seek out

endorsers who are well-known chefs and restaurateurs. However, while the credibility model and its effectiveness can be seen in many celebrity endorsement campaigns, the model fails to account for the successful campaigns which use endorsers who branch off from a celebrities usual brand (e.g. rapper Travis Scott endorsing McDonald's). These campaigns can end in blinding success for both the celebrity and brand, despite the differences between them. The source attractiveness model highlights the influence of likeability and appeal in an endorser, explaining why a brand would choose a conventionally attractive and popular endorser to sell their makeup products instead of an unconventional one. However, the attractiveness model neglects the aspect of endorser authenticity and the part that this plays in purchase intentions throughout various demographics. The most comprehensive is the MTM (Meaning transfer model), which explains why all of these traits somehow transfer onto the brand from the celebrity and vice versa - resulting in a win-win situation for both the brand and the celebrity if well matched. The MTM has its own weaknesses though, mainly the gaps surrounding the research on the negative implications of mismatched celebrity-brand pairings, and the long-term impact that a badly matched endorser–brand fit can have on a company and its brand recognition. Further research could be carried out to investigate the implications of negative public attention on both the brand and endorser to ensure there is a concise formula for celebrity endorsement success.

By improving these models, in particular the meaning transfer model, marketers can gain a more nuanced understanding of how celebrity endorsements influence consumer behaviour. This knowledge will enable more informed decision-making, leading to more effective and authentic endorsement campaigns that resonate with consumers and enhance brand value across all companies that use it.

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3. Study design

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3.1 Research methodology

To achieve the aims of the study and answer the research question, a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be used in the form of a survey. Following on from the secondary research carried out in section 2 in the form of a literature review. Primary data was then extracted after this and gathered to support or disprove the secondary research laid out in section 2. To clarify, the primary research was carried out to directly test and evaluate in which ways celebrity endorsements are successful or unsuccessful, as well as the characteristics of an endorser which are most likely to impact the target demographics' purchase decision-making. Taking into consideration the fact that each of the respondents answered identical questions, the method of a majority quantitative survey was the best choice for data collection in a study which aims to be applied to a large quantity of people (Altunışık, 2004).

As well as the benefit of the survey being identical and therefore easier to analyse via computer programs, the method of a majority quantitative survey increases the likelihood of objectivity within the study (Almedia, 2017), leading to more verifiable results within the study, as there is no room for interpretation. Many researchers use quantitative research methods in order to establish precise cause-and-effect correlations from the data extracted (Verhoef and Casebeer, 1997). A mostly quantitative research approach, though missing out on such plentiful and detailed data as an interview style qualitative method of data collection, produces fact-based and dependable research outcomes (Steckler et al, 1992). It must be noted that although the primary research carried out consisted mostly of numerical scales to measure the participant's feelings towards celebrity endorsement, select questions in the survey used open-ended qualitative style questions in which participants could express their views in

more detail, giving examples and explanations. Though quantitative methods are ideal

for analysing responses objectively, the benefit of using mixed methods is transparent when attempting

to gain an understanding of the 'why' or 'how' using qualitative and the 'what' when using quantitative

(David, 1997). The use of mixed methods within the research facilitated not only the understanding of

what various demographics thought of celebrity endorsement but also *why* they held such thoughts; this

ensured a higher chance of identifying the factors which make a celebrity endorsement either successful

or unsuccessful.

3.2 Research approach

The survey used for the primary research gathering was shared via social media, it was shared through

this method due to the advantage of anonymity being upheld throughout the process. This is significant

because effective anonymity and successful confidentiality leads to participants feeling protected for

their point of view, and therefore tend to productively contribute to the data (Tourangau, 2018).

However, using a majority quantitative style of data collection ensures that the research focuses on the

relevant points for data analysis, limiting the amount of diversion from the topic at hand. In

this regard a quantitative style proved superior; qualitative data collection styles (e.g. interviews) can be

a disadvantage as these methods cause participants to feel free to share their thoughts and add to the

discourse if they believe it is relevant (Bryman and Bell, 2022), which has the possibility of diverting

from the relevant research questions. For this reason, qualitative style questions were in the minority and

only asked for clarification purposes as a follow-up for a quantitative style question. This ensured we

only received relevant information without diluting the responses with those which were not pertinent to

the study and research aims.

To ensure that there was a higher chance of a large number of responses received from the pool of potential participants, a system of reminders was arranged and sent out. This is congruent with Kelley, K (2003) who describes the ideal conditions for high responses for a survey as relying on conciseness while stating that reminders being sent out is key to ensuring the success of sample size. The survey was not shared via private channels such as targeted emails to individuals but rather was shared via Instagram stories, a channel in which multiple followers on an Instagram account can view the posted content and follow the link to fill out the survey. A benefit of this method being utilised is that there is a time-saving element due to the channel being accessible by many viewers at one time. The reminders were sent out as necessary, calculating the number of followers versus the number of responses as time passed. It was of utmost importance when sending out the reminders to keep in mind the phenomenon of survey fatigue causing nonresponse. Survey fatigue is defined as "nonresponse to surveys resulting from being subjected to too many survey invitations" (Socol and Large, 2022, p.2). The consequences of survey fatigue are generally concluded to result in a reduced response rate (Porter et al, 2004). Taking this information into account, it was necessary to only send out reminders via social media once it was deemed that the responses already obtained were not sufficient for the quantitative research threshold, therefore only one reminder was necessary to be sent out more than forty-eight hours after the initial invitation.

To achieve a large representative sample size of Millennial and Gen Z customers, the primary research consisted of an online survey style questionnaire, defined by Check and Schutt (2011) as "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" (p.160). The data collection for the primary research was developed using numerical scales throughout the survey (e.g., likeability, trustworthiness, relatability), as well as open-ended questions to ensure a mixed-method approach to the research, facilitating a more in-depth understanding of the reasoning behind some of the

responses. The survey also included questions focused on demographic information, including age and gender.

3.3. Limitations of the method used.

Although social media was the preferred channel to recruit participants due to its ease of use and large audience intake increasing the sample size of the study – there were limitation issues in terms of age and gender verification. The most challenging was age verification due to the research aims being based on age group demographics; so, it was imperative to make sure the participants fit the age criteria (18-43). Online age verification is known to be a difficult process (Renaud, 2022), even for multi-millionaire companies and brands. During this research, the way the age verification was approached was to insert a disclaimer into the information section which sits above the first question; meaning that a participant would have to see the disclaimer before filling the survey out. However, even given this, there is still a lack of official age verification for participants which slightly decreases the validity of the results.

Secondly, a mixed methods approach was undertaken during the survey; incorporating both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. Despite this, it should be noted that the survey was a majority quantitative questions. The lack of qualitative questions highlights the risk for there to be a limitation in supplying covert or 'hidden' reasoning behind an individual's answers, sentiments, and sensitivities (Taherdoost, 2022). Due to the nature of the survey being conducted on participants' personal feelings – the factor of not being able to gain the full context of the respondents' answers could be seen as a limitation.

Finally, a lack of responses (87) means that there is a lack of statistical validity as the target for the

quantitative method was not met. However, Baruch (1999) concludes that the average response rate for

quantitative academic studies is fifty-five, meaning that the number of respondents in this study (87)

is adequate; but it was imperative that there were statistically significant responses to each of the

questions.

4.0 Data Analysis

The following section will detail the results of the survey questionnaire in which a total of eighty-seven

participants completed the survey.

4.1 Demographics

The following demographics section will detail the demographic factors (age and gender) of the

participants to display the gender and age distribution of the respondents in relation to the research

objectives.

The data collected included 87 responses in total. The age range for the participants was required to be

between 18 – 43 years of age due to the research objectives focusing on only Millennial and 'Gen Z'

responses to celebrity endorsement. Figure 1 (see appendix) presents the correlation between the

respondent's age and the respondent's gender, *Figure 1 displays* that the female respondents totalled 54%

and the male respondents totalled 46%. Of these gender demographics, the majority of female

respondents were aged 21-25 years old (26%), with the majority of male respondents aged 26-30 years

old (25%). The total sum of participants age is as follows: 21-25 = 22%, 26-30 = 22%, 18-21 = 21%, 31-

35 = 14%, 41-43 = 11%, 36-40 = 10%. Due to the study being focused specifically on celebrity

endorsement effectiveness within a certain age range, the participant's ethnicity and locational data were

not collected.

4.2 Market Penetration

The following 'market penetration' section will display the rate and frequency that which the

respondents encounter celebrity endorsements in general. This section will be key in identifying the

target demographics among millennial and Gen Z consumers who are most likely to view celebrity

endorsements.

Figure 2 (see appendix) displays the penetration demographics, 95% of respondents (80% of total

Female participants, 97% of total Male participants) stated that they encounter celebrity endorsements

multiple times throughout their day. The majority of Female participants who stated that they saw

endorsement multiple times a day were in the age range 21-25 (26%), while the majority of Male

respondents who stated that they view endorsement multiple times a day were in the age range 26-30

(25%). 3% of the total number of participants (5% of male participants and 2% of female

participants all belonging to the age group 31-35) reported only viewing celebrity endorsements once a

day, and 5% of Male respondents stated that they only encountered celebrity endorsements every other

day.

When focusing on the perceived trustworthiness/believability of celebrity endorsements in general

among participants, *Figure 3* (see appendix) presents the responses on a 1-10 scale, the majority

(43%) of Female participants responded 8 out of 10 (1 = Not trustworthy, 10 = Trustworthy), the

majority (47%) of Male participants responded 4 out of 10. Among males, the majority response

belonged to the 21-25 age group with 71% responding with 4 out of 10. Among females, the majority

response within the 21–25-year-old age was 42% responding 8 out of 10. The demographics with the

lowest rating on the 1 – 10 scale for trustworthiness/believability were 36–41-year-old males (80%

responded 4 out of 10). The demographics with the highest rating on the 1 – 10 scale for

trustworthiness/believability were 18–21-year-old females (60% responded 8 out of 10).

Figure 5 (see in appendix) presents the correlation between participants' age, gender, and which media

platform they recall seeing the most celebrity endorsements on. 61% of the total sample size (62% of

Female respondents, 60% of Male respondents) stated that *Instagram was* the main platform they

encountered the majority of celebrity endorsements on. 100% of both Female and Male 18–21-year-old

participants stated that they see the most celebrity endorsements on *Instagram.*

4.3 Brand Recognition

Figure 4 (see appendix) presents the data collected in relation to the extent participants recall the

brand being advertised when encountering an endorsement for said brand. 82% of 21–25-year-old

Female participants stated that they 'often' recall the brand/endorser regardless of their opinion of the

brand/endorser, with 87% of 18-21 Males stating that they 'Often' recall the brand. 55% of 18–21-year-

old female participants stated that they 'Always' recall the brand, and 50% of 26–30-year-old Male

participants stated that they only 'sometimes' recall the brand.

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4.4 Brand switch criteria

Figure 6 presents the responses of participants when asked whether a successful endorsement would be enough to evoke a brand switch from their current favourite, 100% of female participants in the age range 18-30 stated that a successful endorsement *would* be enough to convince them to switch brands from their favourite. 59% of Male participants between the age of 18-30 stated that a successful endorsement *would be* enough to convince them to switch brands from their favourite. 100% of Male participants within the 41-43-year-old age group and the 21-25-year-old age group stated that a successful celebrity endorsement would *not* convince them to switch brands from their favourite.

4.5 Celebrity endorser qualities

The following section will detail which attributes and qualities were most and least important to the respondents on a scale of 1-5. The qualities the respondents were asked to rate were the following: Trustworthiness, likeability, relatability, product expertise, product use, attractiveness, and aligned values with the brand. Through statistical analysis, the top 3 traits of an endorser will be deduced.

4.5.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was the endorser trait which held the majority positive response across all 87 respondents, with 64% of all respondents stating that *trustworthiness* as a quality was a 5/5 quality in a celebrity endorser. 100% of the age groups 36-41 and 41-43 rated *trustworthiness* as a 5/5 quality.

4.5.2 Likeability

Likeability was the trait which held the second biggest overall majority with 61% of all respondents rating *likeability as* a 5/5 endorser trait. 100% of Females aged 36-41 and 41-43 rated *likeability 5/5*, and 91% of females aged 21-25 rated *likeability* 5/5.

4.5.5 Product use

When asked to rate how important *product use* is as a quality in an endorser (the importance of a celebrity using a product in order for their endorsement to be trusted), 47% of the total sample size rated product use as a 5/5 quality. The majority demographic which rated product use as a 5/5 quality was 36–41-year-old and 41–43-year-old Male respondents (86%).

4.5.3 Product Expertise

Product expertise was rated as a 5/5 endorser quality by 43% of the total sample size. 100% of Males in the age group 41-43 rated the quality a 5/5, and 62% of Females in the same age group (41-43) rated *product expertise a* 5/5 in terms of endorser traits.

4.5.4 Relatability

In relation to desirable endorser traits, 40% of total respondents rated relatability as a 5/5 quality in a celebrity endorser. The majority demographic group which rated relatability as a 5/5 quality were Female 41–43-year-olds, with 87% of that demographic rating relatability as a 5/5 endorser quality.

4.5.5 Endorser values

When asked how important it is for a celebrity endorser to align with a company's values and image, only 10% of the total sample stated the quality was of 5/5 importance for a celebrity endorser to possess.

The majority (55%) of respondents rated the quality 3/5 importance. The age group with the highest rating majority was 26–30-year-old Males, of whom 40% rated endorser values/image aligning with brand values/image as a 4/5 quality.

4.5.6 Attractiveness

The endorser quality attractiveness showed the biggest disparity between the demographics, with 26% of 18–30-year-old respondents rating attractiveness as a 4/5 endorser quality, and 38% of 31–43-year-old respondents rating attractiveness as a 1/5 endorser quality. Overall, 38% of the total sample population rated attractiveness as a 3/5 endorser quality.

Overall, the three most important traits among the total sample size were:

- Trustworthiness

- Likeability

- Product use

4.6 Celebrity endorsement effect on brand (positive)

When asked whether a celebrity endorsement had ever positively affected their view of a brand, the majority of respondents stated that 'no', a celebrity endorsement has not positively affected their view of a brand. 41% stated that 'yes', a celebrity endorsement had positively affected their view of a brand. The majority demographic group which stated 'yes' to an endorsement positively affecting their brand was 21-25-year-old Female respondents, with a majority of 68% in that specific group stating that a celebrity endorsement had positively affected their view of a brand.

4.6.1 Qualitative analysis of positive responses

This section will detail the key qualitative responses as a follow-up to the previous question: Has a celebrity endorsement ever positively affected your view/opinion of a brand?

Out of the 22 qualitative respondents who stated that an endorsement *had* positively affected their view of a brand, 10% referenced Gary Lineker in his endorsement of Walkers crisps (18-30, Male). 10% referenced Molly Mae's endorsement for the clothing company 'Pretty Little Thing' (18-25, Female). When asked for more detail on *why* the endorsement was positive for them, one respondent said ''Molly Mae partnership made the brand (Pretty Little Thing) seem higher end than I previously thought." 30% of 18–30-year-old Male participants referenced current or retired athletes within their response (Lionel Messi, David Beckham, Roger Federer, Harry Redknapp, Gary Lineker). 20% of 18–30-year-old Female respondents stated that their positive view of the brand was influenced by the endorser's 'style'. 10% of Female 18–30-year-old Female participants stated that their positive view of the brand was influenced by the endorser's 'fun' personality, with 15% of 18–30-year-old Female respondents stating that their view of the brand had been positively affected by the 'inclusive' endorser.

4.7 celebrity endorsement effect on brand (negative)

When asked whether a celebrity endorsement had ever negatively affected their view of a brand, the majority of respondents overall (82%) stated that 'no' a celebrity endorsement had *not negatively* affected their overall view of a brand. The majority demographic which stated that a celebrity endorsement *had* negatively affected their view of a brand was 50% of 31-35-year-old Female respondents.

4.7.1 Qualitative analysis of negative responses

This section will detail the key qualitative responses as a follow-up to the previous question: Has a celebrity endorsement ever negatively affected your view/opinion of a brand?

Out of the 11 qualitative respondents who stated that an endorsement *had* negatively affected their view of a brand, 27% (all males, 26-35) stated that their reason was due to the endorsement being 'too political'. Examples such as Tampax, Gillette, and Budweiser were used to demonstrate their point. 18% of the respondents (Female, 26-35) cited 'insensitivity' as the reason for their negative opinion of the brand, referencing the Kendall Jenner Pepsi endorsement which was released in 2017. 18% of respondents stated that they held a negative opinion of a brand due to the endorser 'not fitting' the brand, with one respondent stating that they held a negative opinion of 'Au vodka' due to the endorser Charlie Sloth, making the brand seem 'tacky'. One respondent stated that they held a negative view of the brand 'Slim Fast' due to it being endorsed by Big Narstie, an overweight television personality, stating that "because he is overweight, it doesn't endorse the product well."

4.8 Social media influencers

The following section will detail the section of the survey which investigated whether the participants regard social media 'influencers' as celebrities and whether they would be more encouraged to buy a product if the product was endorsed by a social media influencer.

When asked whether they regard social media influencers as celebrities, 71% of the total sample stated that 'yes', they regard social media influencers as celebrities. However, there was a large statistical significance disparity between the age groups, with 96% of the age groups between 18-30 regarding influencers as celebrities, whereas 91% of age groups between 31-43 stated that 'no' they do not regard social media influencers as celebrities.

4.8.1 Social media influencer effect on purchase decision

When asked whether they are more likely to trust a product endorsement via a social media endorsement/endorser, 52% of the 18-30 age group answered 'yes', and 90% of the 31-43 age group answered 'no'. The highest statistical majority was within the Female 18-21 demographic, with 90% of Female 18–21-year-old participants stating that 'yes', they would be more likely to trust a product endorsement via social media endorsement/endorser.

5.0 Discussion

During the undertaking of this study, the key aims were to understand the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on Gen Z and Millennial consumers, with an emphasis on why consumers either like or dislike a celebrity endorsement. The following will discuss the findings of the research in relation to the main research objectives of the study. The research findings illuminate how celebrity endorsements resonate with Millennial and Gen Z audiences, directly addressing the study's central aims:

The research aims for this study were the following:

- Identify three characteristics which Gen Z and Millennial consumers find most appealing in a celebrity endorser.

- Determine if a successful celebrity endorsement can influence at least 10% of Gen Z and Millennial consumers to switch from their favourite brand.

- Establish the most effective channel for a celebrity endorsement to be broadcast on.

5.1 Endorser Characteristics

In relation to identifying the most appealing celebrity endorser characteristics, it can be concluded that across all demographics, the respondents identified the quality of *trustworthiness* as the most paramount quality for a celebrity endorser to possess. This is congruent with Thomas and Johnson's (2019) research on the topic of trustworthiness in relation to celebrity endorsement; in which they identified that celebrity trustworthiness has a disproportionate effect on purchase decisions. The importance of *likeability as* a quality held by a celebrity endorser followed *trustworthiness* as the second most important quality that an endorser should possess, validating that Gen Z and Millennial consumers seem to gravitate towards celebrities they find relatable or appealing. The third most important quality that an endorser should possess according to our respondents is *product use*, in other words, the importance of the consumer being confident that the endorser *uses the* product they endorse.

Overall, the overwhelming statistical significance of trustworthiness as a desired endorser quality aligns with the source credibility model (Hovland and Weiss, 1951), strengthening its relevance in understanding endorsement effectiveness within consumer demographics. It should be noted that further research is needed in order to correlate qualities such as *likeability* and *product interaction* with other endorsement models in order to increase positive brand associations among Millennial and Gen Z consumers. A significant finding within this section of the survey was the statistical significance of *relatability and attractiveness* as endorser qualities; with 50% of 18–21-year-old female participants rating *attractiveness* as a 5/5 quality for an endorser to possess, and 62% of Female participants aged between 31-43 rating attractiveness a 1/5 quality for an endorser to possess. This is a stark contrast when compared to the responses when asked about *relatability* as an endorser quality, wherein 75% of 31–43-year-old Female participants rated *relatability as* a 5/5 endorser quality.

5.2 Influence on brand switching behaviour.

58% of respondents stated that a successful endorsement would be sufficient to make them switch from their favourite brand, answering one of the research objectives. The data collected suggests that carefully formulated celebrity endorsements *do* have the potential to influence brand-switching decisions among Millennial and Gen Z consumers, specifically within younger demographics; especially among young women (18-25). This aligns with studies (Claessens and Van den Bulck, 2015) suggesting females may be more receptive than males when it comes to para-social relationships with celebrities. The data also highlights the power of social influence, even among demographics which are generally known to be more sceptical about traditional celebrities and traditional advertising (Knoll et al, 2017). A larger and more demographically diverse sample would be needed to definitely conclude whether 10% of Millennials and Gen Z would be convinced to switch brands due to a successful celebrity endorsement.

5.3. The most effective media platform

The findings of the study overwhelmingly establish Instagram as the primary platform where Millennials and Gen Z encounter the most celebrity endorsements on. This solidifies Instagram's role as a core hub for influencer marketing and endorser–driven campaigns on the platform (Hung and Ma, 2023). However, it should be noted that the second most popular platform response was Television (18%), showing that traditional forms of marketing are still somewhat powerful in terms of endorsement recollection.

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5.4 Conclusions:

This study was carried out with the intention of examining the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on Millennial and Generation Z individuals. The findings offer valuable insight into how these age demographics feel about endorsement and the effect they have on their purchase decisions. The key findings of this study highlight the fact that Millennial and Gen Z consumers resonate most strongly with celebrity endorsers who personify traits such as trustworthiness, likeability, and genuine product use. These qualities have been shown in this study to significantly increase participants' positive perceptions of both the endorser and the brand. More specific insights were gained throughout this research as well, such as older women valuing relatability rather than attractiveness, whereas it is the opposite among the young participants. This finding is congruent with studies (Buunk and Dijkstra, 2011) which found that certain women are less likely to respond well to traits such as attractiveness, when making their purchase decisions, and rather value relatability more. In general, the study found that a successful celebrity endorsement has the ability to sway brand preferences among a significant portion of Millennial and Gen Z consumers, particularly young women. The study emphasised Instagram as the primary platform among Millennials and Gen Z, and the statistical significance of the findings highlights the necessity for brands to use social media (specifically Instagram) in order to enhance their brand awareness and market penetration. The majority of respondents stating that they 'Often' recall the brand being advertised regardless of their personal opinion signifies a clear strategy for marketers to use platforms such as Instagram, as a means of penetrating the market. The most relevant literature carried out in the review in section two was the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1986), the MTM suggests that celebrities hold a certain number of traits (e.g. style, aesthetic) which can be 'transferred' to a brand via an endorsement. Throughout the qualitative data analysis, when participants were asked to explain why they liked a certain celebrity

endorsement, a majority of the respondents who answered stated that it was due to the celebrity making the brand 'seem' more stylish/classy. However, as the findings showed, the MTM can also translate into a brand being perceived negatively due to the traits of the endorser 'rubbing off' on the brand. When asked to elaborate on a celebrity endorsement they found negative; nearly 10% of respondents stated that they had a negative reaction due to the endorser being 'tacky' or not fitting the brand enough.

The findings of our research on endorser traits found a clear correlation between older participants valuing trustworthiness and product expertise in a celebrity endorser, which is congruent with the source credibility model proposed by Hoveland, Janis and Kelley (1953); which proposed that these traits are the most effective when encouraging purchase intent via celebrity endorsement. From the findings of our research, it can be determined that the Source Credibility Model holds significant relevance when marketing to older Millennials (30-43) who value credibility and trustworthiness in a celebrity endorser. On the other hand, the importance of traits such as likeability and relatability, as well as attractiveness among the younger participants (18-30) display a definite relevance of the Source Attractiveness Model (Mcguire, 1968). Both of these models have shown relevance in our findings, albeit for differing demographics; but the connection between the older and younger demographics and the traits they find most appealing, as well as the past source models can be leveraged by future marketers to increase their engagement among both these generations.

5.5 Limitations

While the study was informative in terms of analysing the changing perspectives of young people toward celebrity endorsement, the lack of responses (87) contributed to a lack of generalisability among the greater population. Future paths for research could include investigating the impact of cultural factors have on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, as well as exploring the rise of newer social

media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube; specifically, how marketers can utilize these platforms to drive engagement from Millennial and Gen Z consumers. Future research could also explore the effects of long-term endorsement versus short–term, and whether this factors into brand loyalty and purchase behaviour among Millennials and Gen Z.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, five key recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement campaigns targeting Millennials and Gen Z:

1. Prioritise partnering with celebrities who genuinely embody likeability and attractiveness when targeting younger demographics (18-30).

2. Campaigns targeting younger females (18-25) should specifically emphasise relatability and aspirational qualities.

3. Campaigns aimed at older demographics should prioritise trustworthiness and product expertise in an endorser.

4. Brands should develop a strong Instagram presence to resonate with the target audience.

5. Traditional celebrities still have sway (e.g. David Beckham, and Claudia Winkleman), but an emphasis on authentic connections via social media is imperative for brand recognition.

Overall, the findings discovered throughout this research highlight the complex nature of celebrity endorsement effectiveness among Millennial and Gen Z consumers. While it is nuanced, there is clear statistical significance throughout the findings which marketers can use to maximize the impact of their campaigns. In particular when focusing on the age demographics that marketers are trying to reach – this

research underlines the attitudes and perceptions towards celebrity endorsement changing with age, and priorities shifting when it comes to endorsement affecting purchase decisions. The key findings can be attributed to real-life campaign situations, such as ensuring that *all* endorsers used in campaigns exhibit traits such as genuine likeability and trustworthiness. A brand such as Dove, which predominantly markets to older millennial women, will be able to maximise its campaigns by using models who embody relatability and product expertise. As well as this, using less conventionally attractive models in their campaigns, and straying away from standard beauty would ensure a higher chance of their target demographic (older millennial women) deciding to purchase.

This differs though when it comes to the traits which marketers would be best in seeking out in their endorsers, they use in campaigns targeted at younger demographics. Both our quantitative and qualitative findings show that brands such as Adidas, or PLT (Pretty Little Thing) which generally target Gen Z and younger millennial consumers should adhere to completely different standards than with older demographics. Adidas, targeting younger males should choose attractive athlete celebrity endorsers who display aspirational qualities and tend to be respected among the general population of young males; the findings also show that brands should stray away from involving politics when marketing to Gen Z and Millennial men. The findings show that the endorser's qualities bleed into the brand image and recognition so PLT, a clothing brand aimed at Gen Z and young Millennial women, should ensure their endorser is popular and attractive while also being relatable. While younger female consumers value attractiveness and likeability, they also value aspirational qualities in campaign endorsers; this can be utilised with a brand such as Nike increasing their partnerships with Female sports teams and using more female athlete endorsers. It must be noted that in order for these campaigns to have the most impact; marketers must know their target demographic accurately. A strong Instagram presence is crucial to engaging with the majority of age demographics, and while traditional celebrities

still retain influence, as shown in the qualitative analysis (e.g. David Beckham, Claudia Winkleman), fostering authentic connections through social media is increasingly important for gaining brand recognition. By following these recommendations, marketers can utilise the power of celebrity endorsements to effectively engage and influence Millennial and Gen Z consumers.

The findings throughout this research have established a clear route for future research to focus on, such as the different reactions to a model's attractiveness depending on the age and gender demographics; and investigating why the participants hold such an opinion in an interview style. This would be useful due to the gaps of research that have been uncovered throughout the analysis of this research, for example, investigating deeper into *why* the respondents valued certain traits over others (e.g. relatability over attractiveness) instead of concluding from past studies on the topic.

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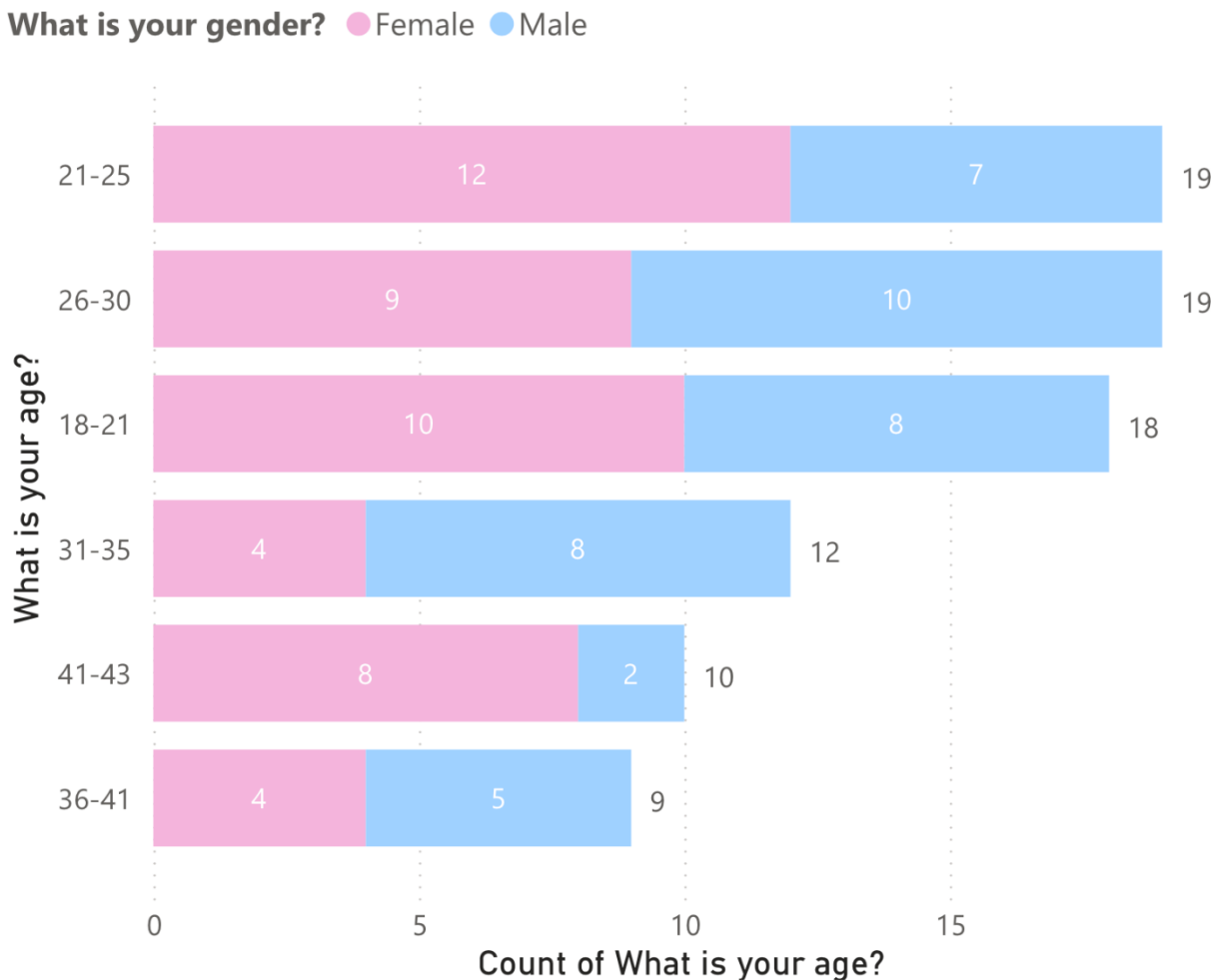
Appendix A – Data Visualisation

The following section will include the visualized data extracted from the survey responses.

1.1 Demographics:

Figure 1: What is your age? What is your gender?

*Figure 1 displays the number of respondents who identify as either female or male (54% female, 46% male), and the age group demographics of the respondents ((21-25 - **22%**, 26-30 - **22%**, 18-21 - **21%**, 31-35 - **14%**, 41-43 - **11%**, 36-40 - **10%**).*

1.2 Penetration:

Figure 2: How often do you see celebrity endorsements?
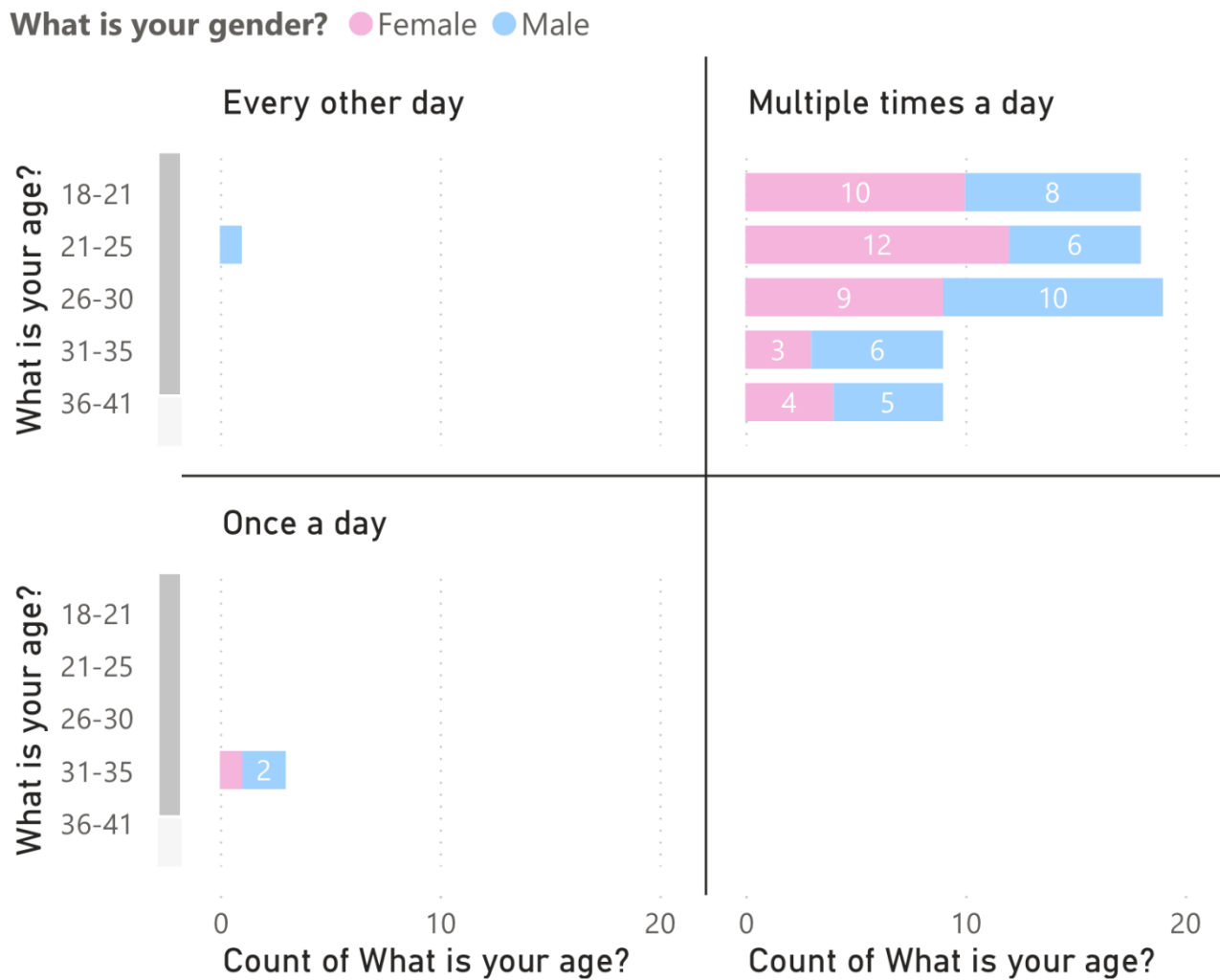
Figure 2 displays the rate at which the respondents encounter celebrity endorsement in general (95% = Multiple times a day, 3% = Once a day, 2% = Every other day).

Figure 3: **How believable and trustworthy do you find celebrity endorsements in general? (Not trustworthy = 1, Trustworthy = 10).**
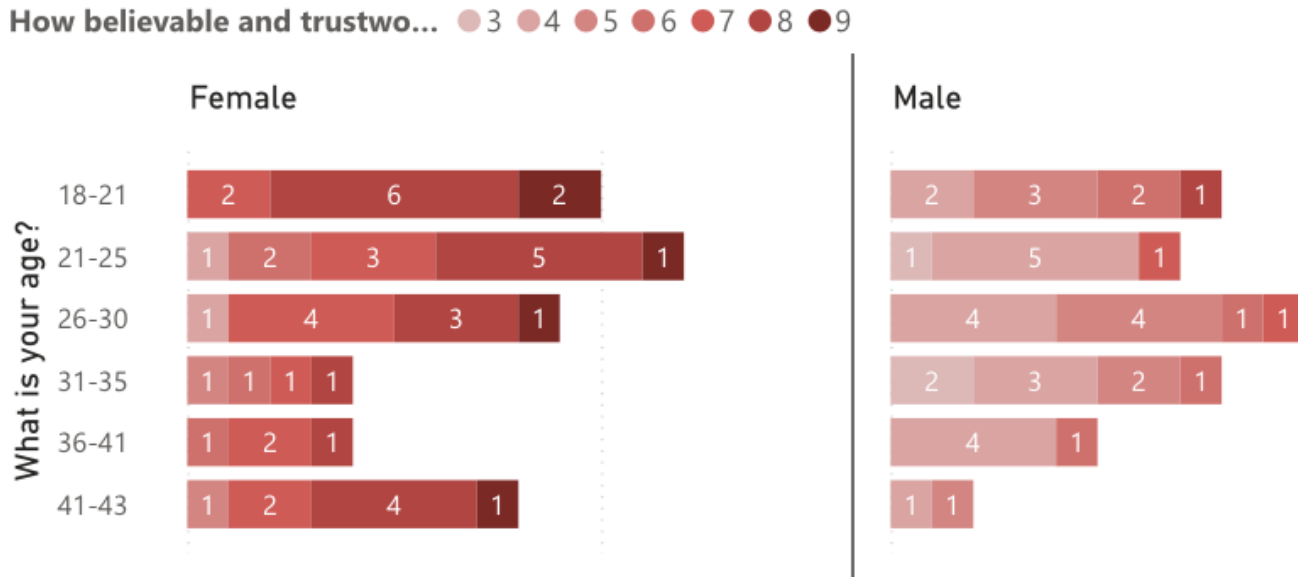
Figure 3 displays respondents age and gender, correlated with how believable/trustworthy they find celebrity endorsements in general (Female majority 18-21 (13%) rated celebrity endorsements 8 out of 10, Male majority 21-25 (12%) rated celebrity endorsement 4 out of 10.

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Figure 4: <u>Can you typically recall the brand being advertised when you see a celebrity endorsement regardless of your personal opinion of the celebrity or product?</u>
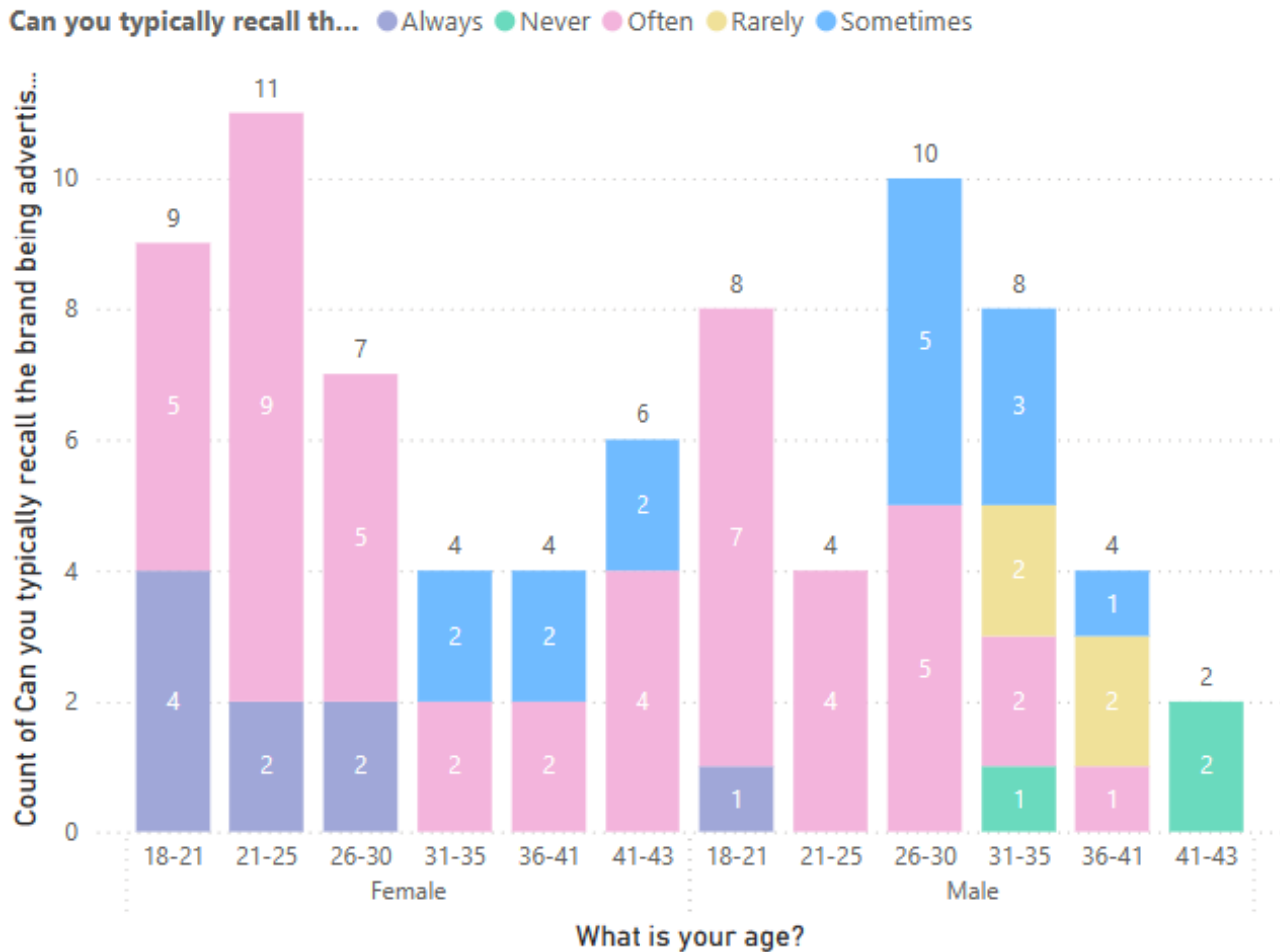
Figure 4 displays the correlation between participants age, gender, and to which extent they can recall the brand being advertised when seeing a celebrity endorsement, regardless of their personal opinion of the celebrity or product.

Figure 5: Which media platform do you usually see the most celebrity endorsements on?
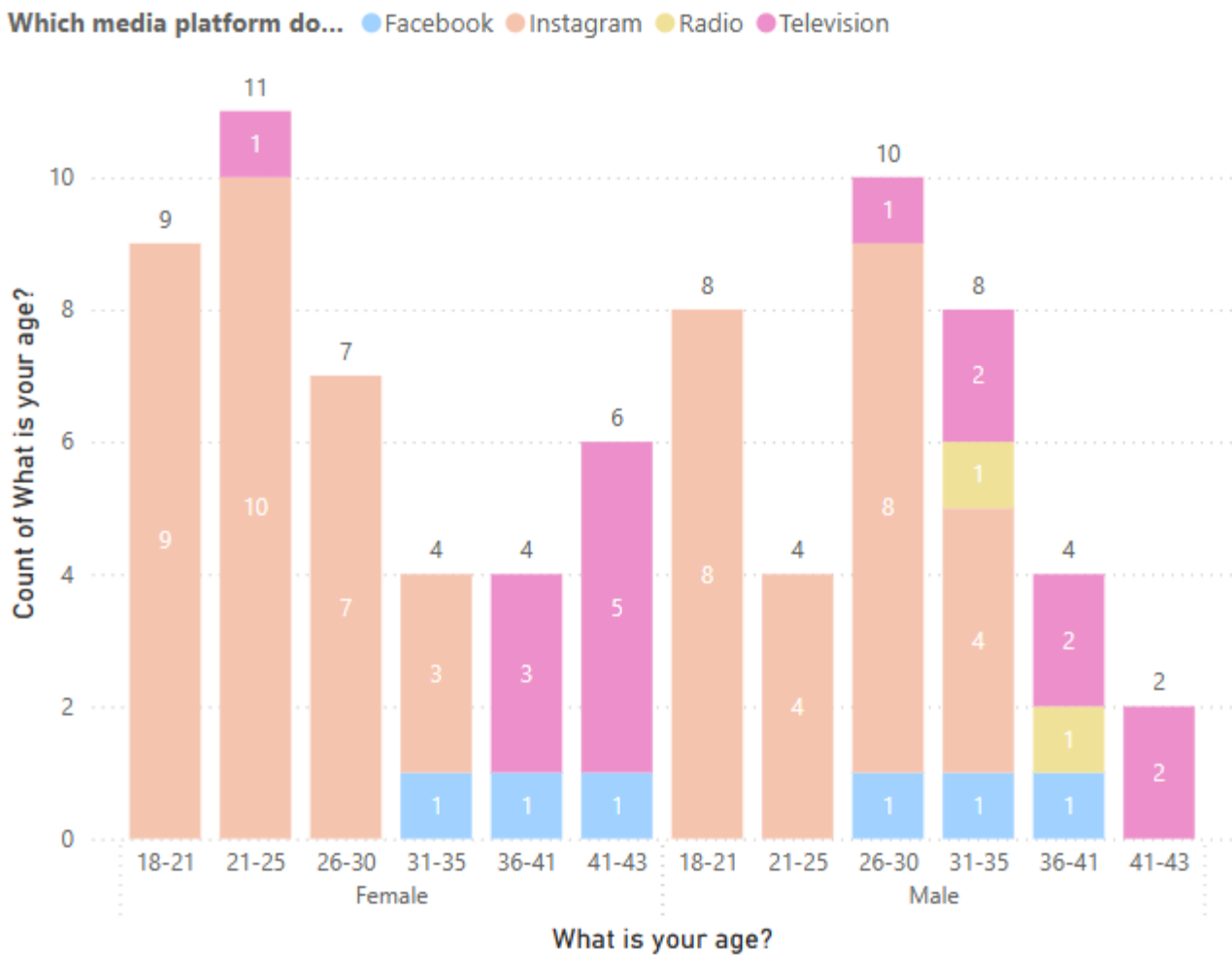
Figure 5 displays the correlation between participants age, gender, and which media platform they usually see the most celebrity endorsements on. Instagram highest majority overall (61%)

Figure 6: Would a successful celebrity endorsement be enough to convince you to switch brands from your current favourite?
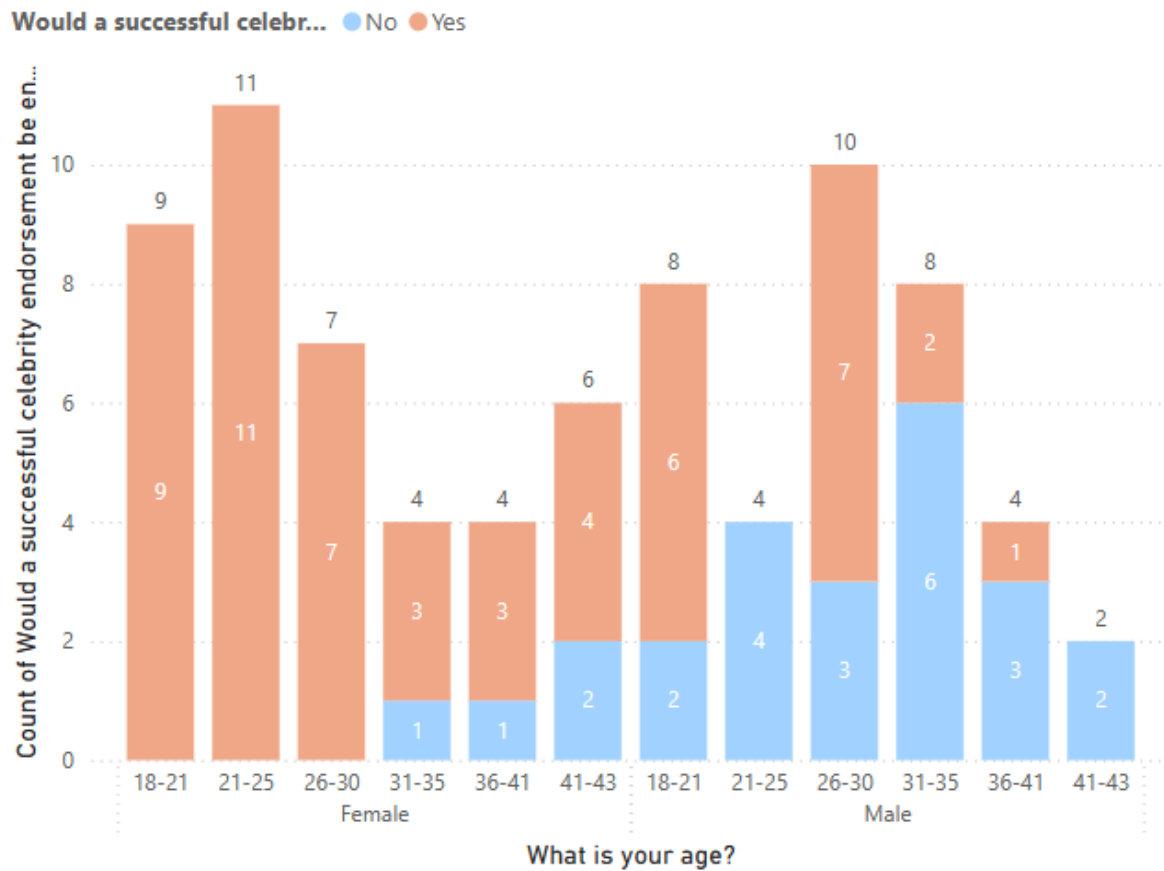
Figure 6 displays the number of respondents who would be convinced by a successful celebrity endorsement to switch brands from their current favorite (79% of Female participants stated 'yes', 40% of Male participants stated 'yes').

Figure 7: **How important is trustworthiness in a celebrity endorser?**
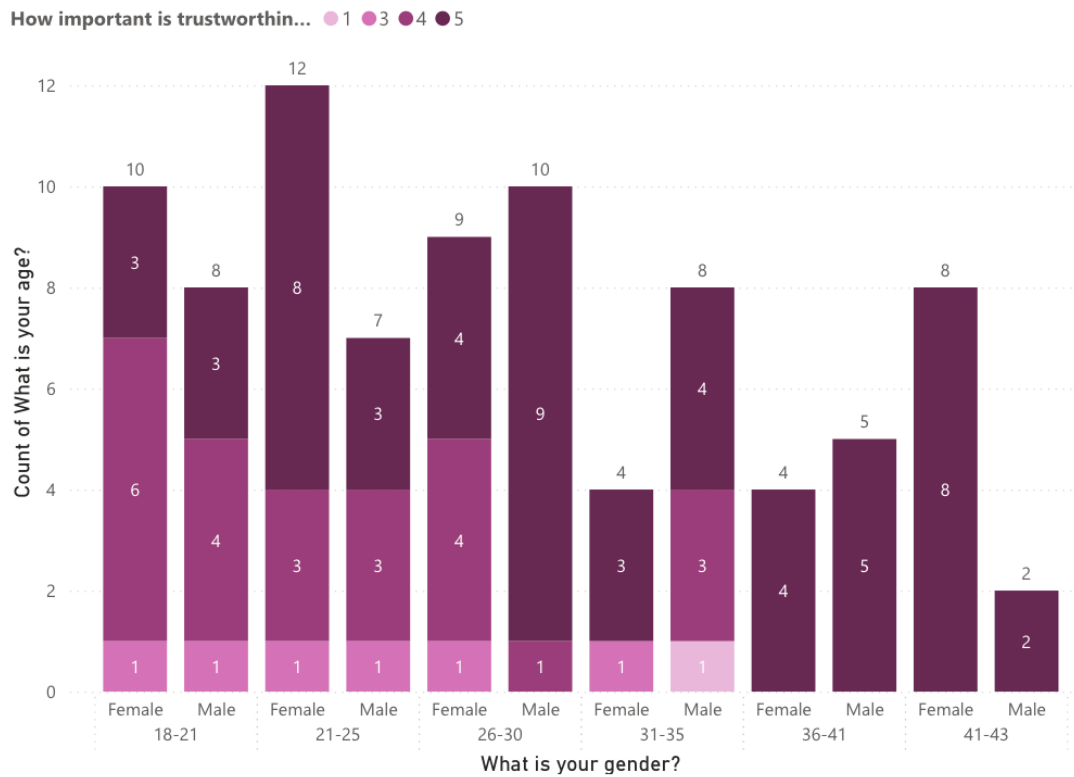
Figure 7 displays the participants rating of the importance of endorser trustworthiness on a scale of 1-5. 64% of total number of respondents rated trustworthiness 5 out of 5.

Figure 8: How important is relatability in a celebrity endorser?
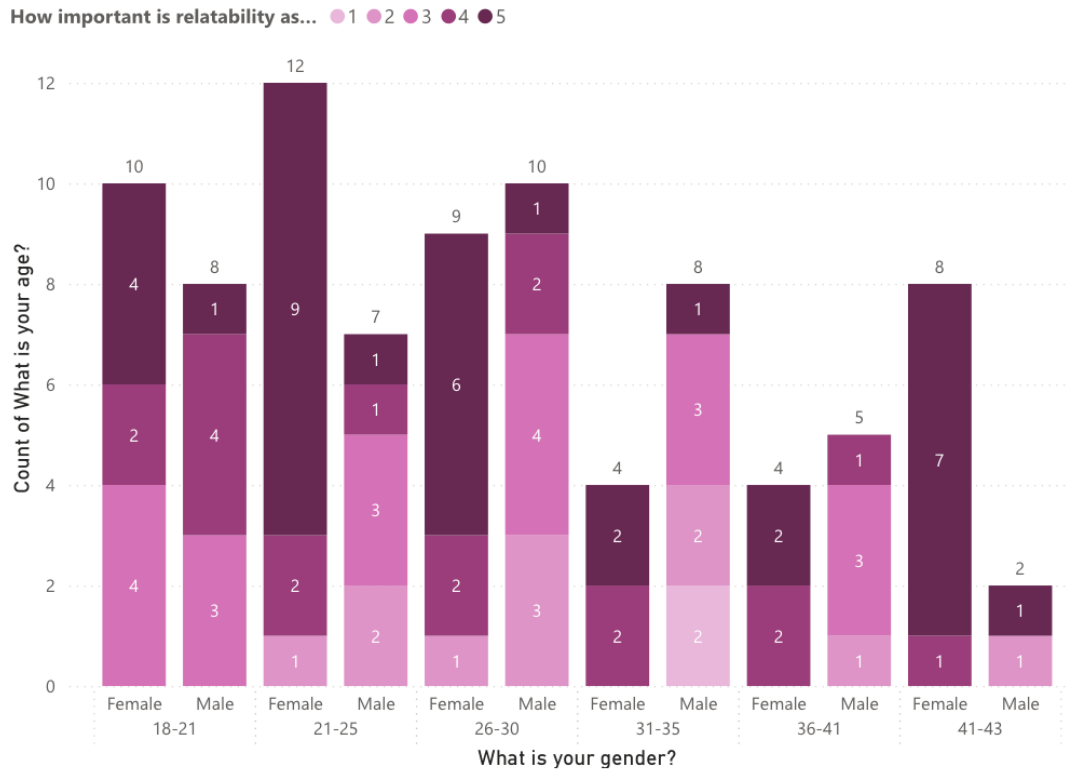
Figure 8 displays respondents rating of 'relatability' as a quality in an endorser on a scale of 1-5. 40% of total respondents rated relatability 5/5. 87% of 41–43-year-old Females rated relatability 5/5.

Figure 9: How important is product expertise in a celebrity endorser?
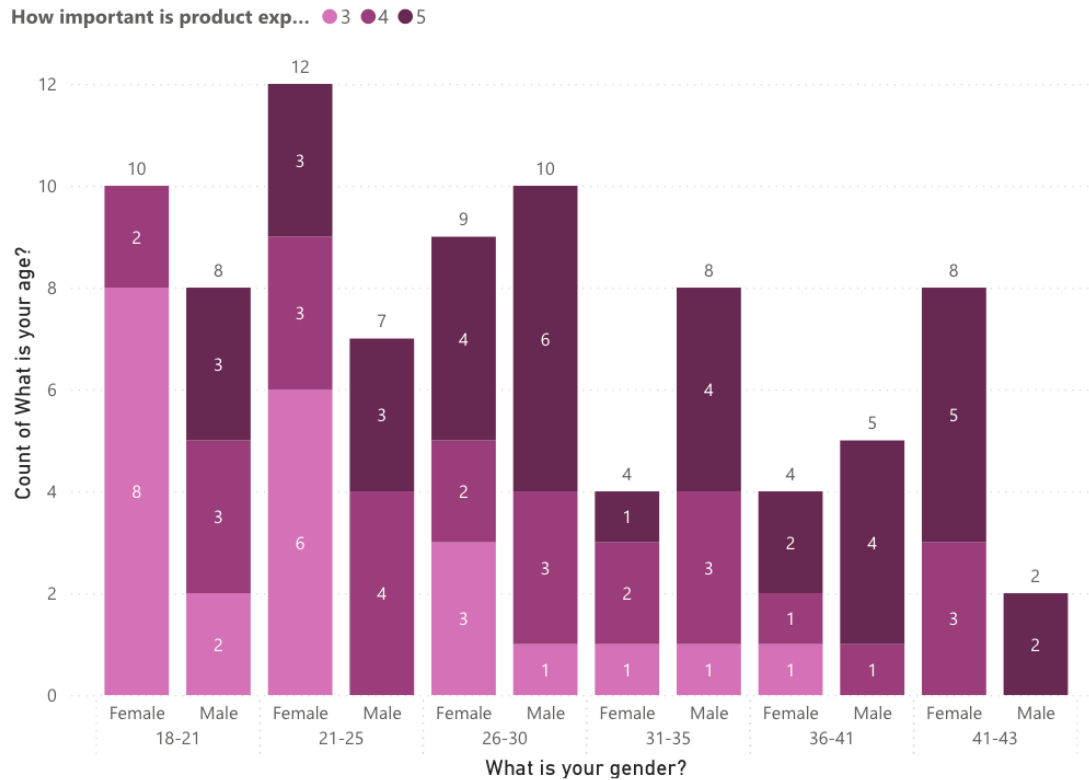
Figure 9 displays the respondents rating of 'product expertise' as a quality in an endorser on a scale 1-5. Majority of respondents (43%) rated 'product expertise' as a 5/5 endorser quality.

Figure 10: How important is likeability in a celebrity endorser?
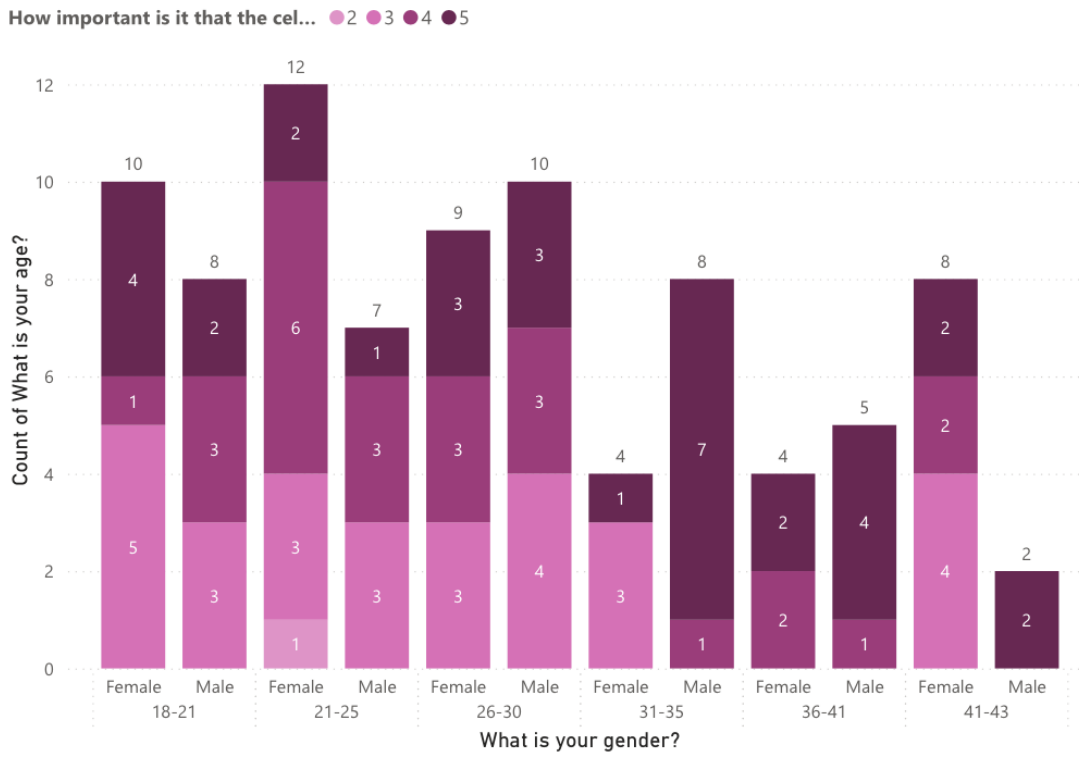
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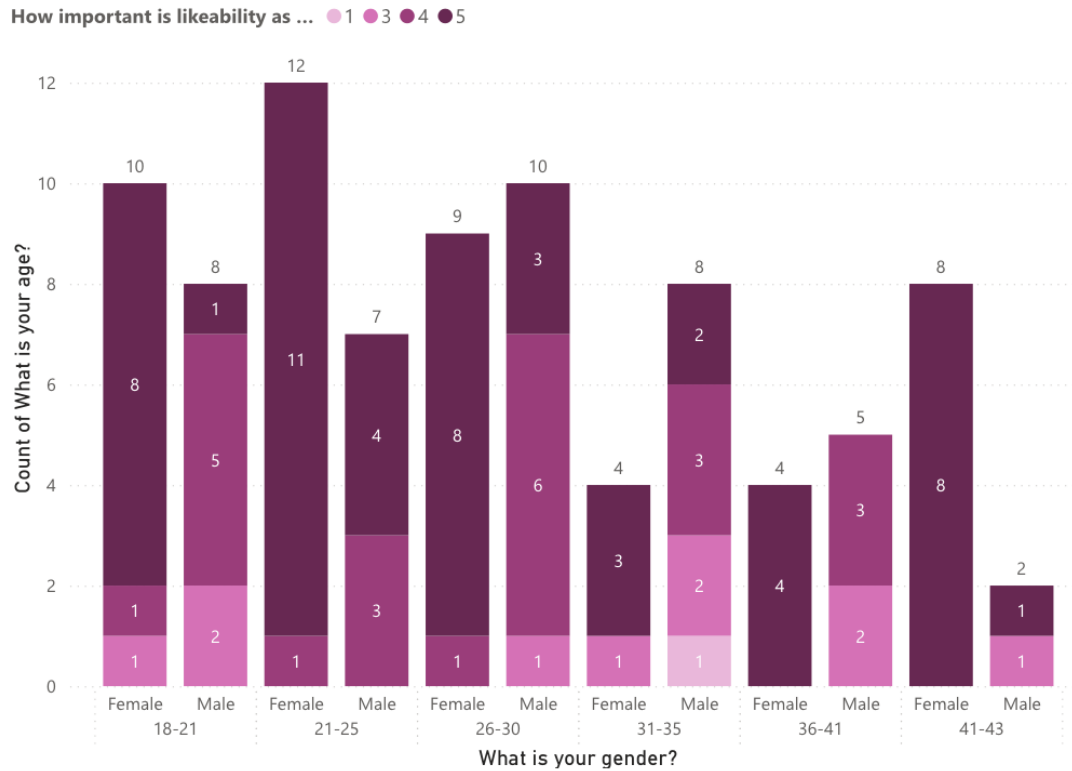
Figure 10

displays the respondents rating of 'Likeability' as a quality in an endorser on a scale 1-5. Majority of respondents (61%) rated 'likeability' as a 5/5 endorser quality.

Figure 11: How important is it that the celebrity uses the product themselves in order for you to trust their endorsement?

Figure 11 displays the respondents rating of 'How important is it that the celebrity uses the product themselves' as a quality in an endorser on a scale 1-5. 28% of respondents stated the quality was of 4/5 importance. The majority group which rated the quality 5/5 was 31–35-year-old males (87%).

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Figure 12: How important is it for a celebrity endorser to align with a brands values and image?
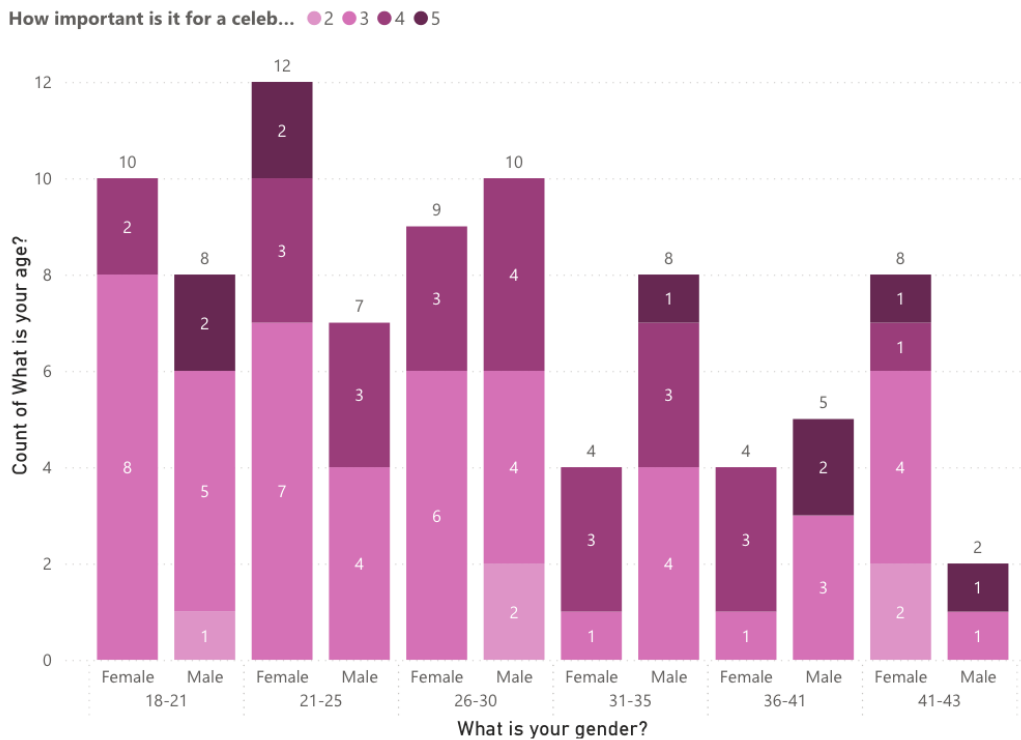

Figure 12 displays the respondents rating of 'How important is it for a celebrity endorser to align with a brands values and image?' as a quality in an endorser on a scale 1-5. (55%) of respondents stated the quality was of 3/5 importance. The age group with the highest rating was 40% of 26–30-year-old Males.

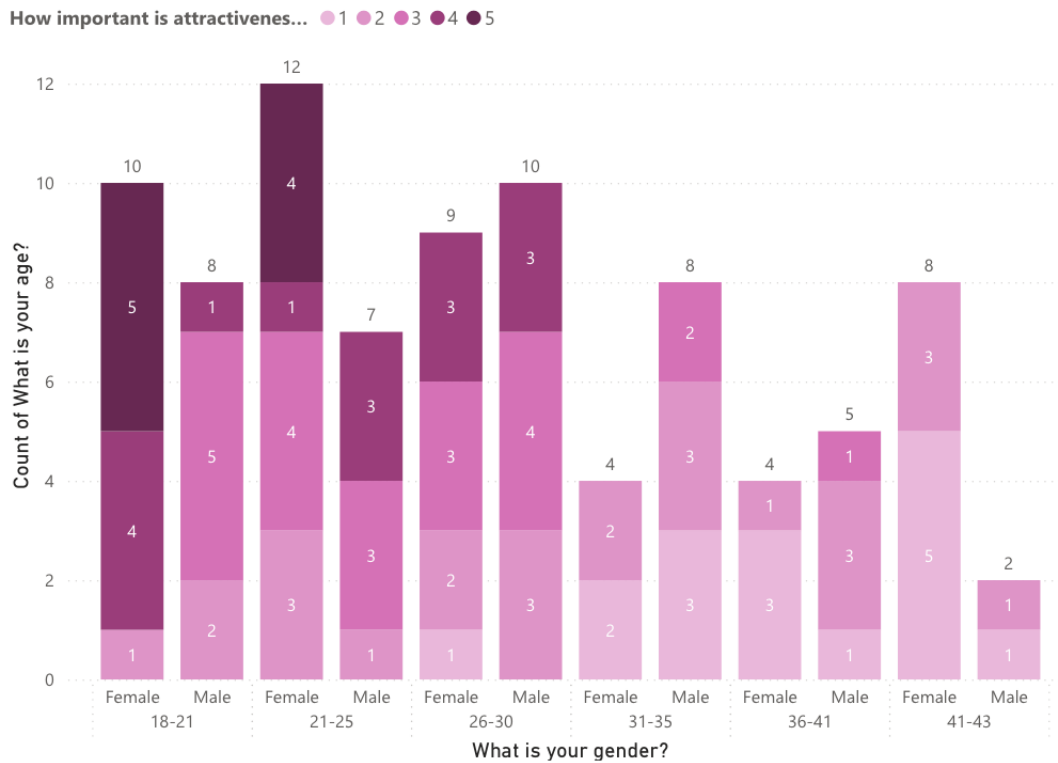**Figure 13: How important is attractiveness in a celebrity endorser?**

Figure 13 displays the respondents rating of 'Attractiveness' as quality in an endorser on a scale of 1-5. 26% of age groups (18-21, 21-25, 26-30) rated 'attractiveness' a 4/5 endorser quality, 38% of age groups (31-35, 36-41, 41-43) rated 'attractiveness ' a 1/5 endorser quality.

Figure 14: Has a celebrity endorsement ever positively affected your view/opinion of a brand?

Count of What is your gender? by What is your age?, What is your gender? and Has a celebrity endorsement ever positively affected your view of a brand?

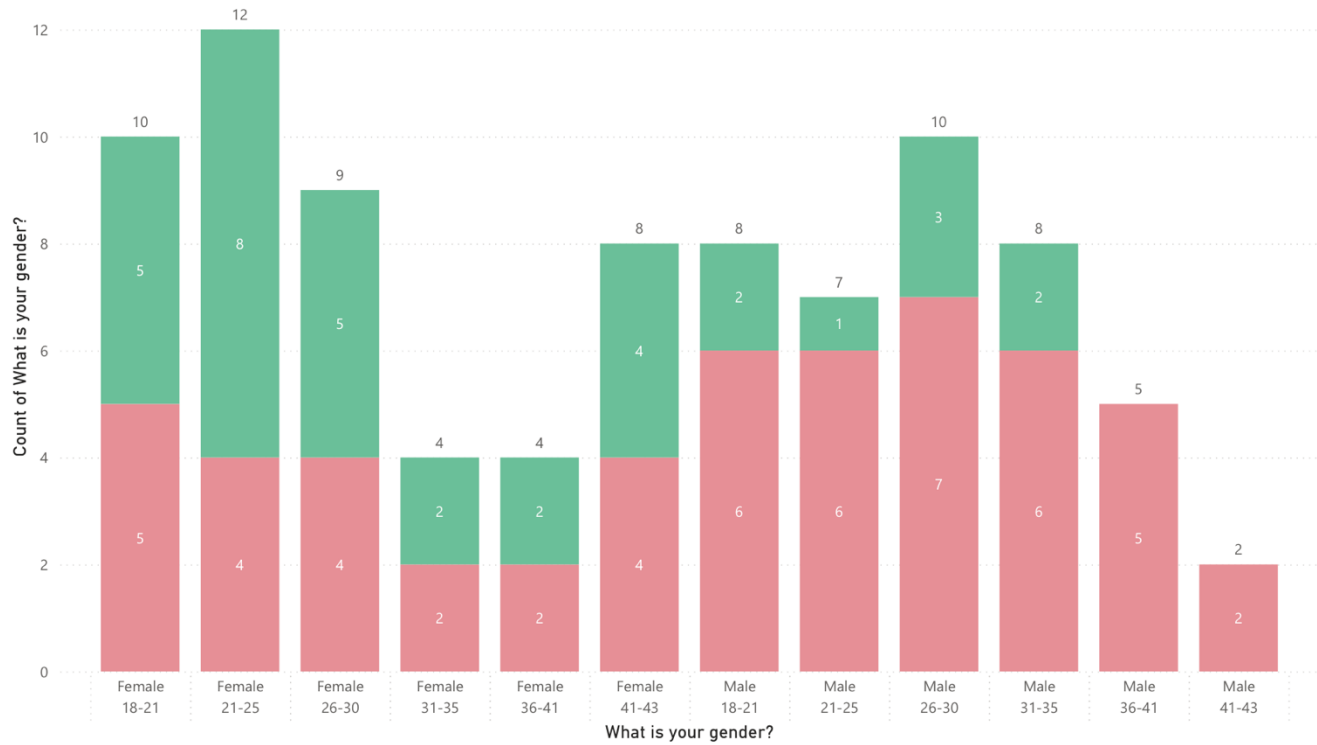Has a celebrity endorsement ever positively aff... ● No ● Yes

Figure 14 displays the number of respondents who answered 'yes' (41%) or 'no' (59%) to whether a celebrity endorsement has ever positively affected their view/opinion of a brand. Female 21–25-year-old respondents held the majority with 68% of that specific age group stating 'yes' to an endorsement positively affecting their view of a brand.

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Figure 15: Has a celebrity endorsement ever negatively affected your view/opinion of a brand?

Count of What is your gender? by What is your age?, What is your gender? and Has a celebrity endorsement ever negatively affected your view of a brand?

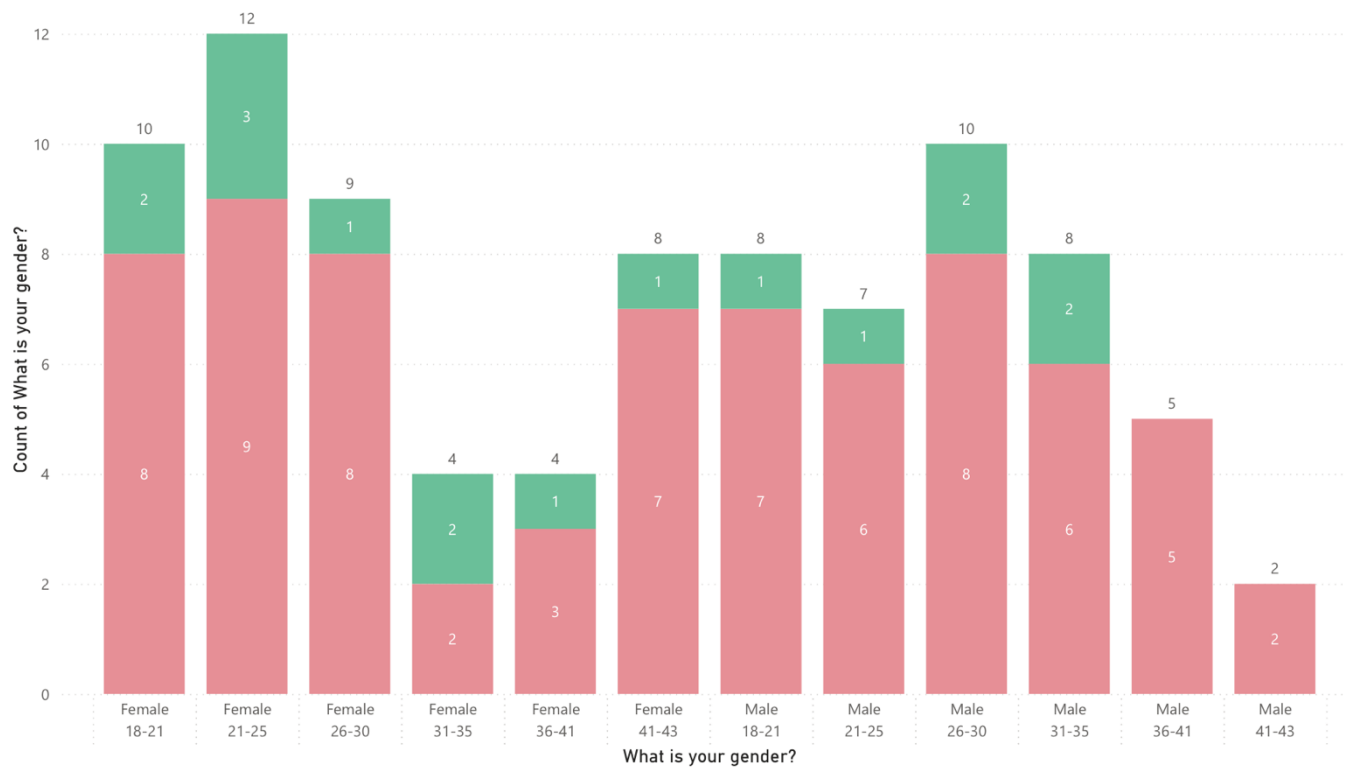Has a celebrity endorsement ever negatively af... ● No ● Yes

Figure 15 displays the number of respondents who answered 'yes' (18%) or 'no'(82%) to whether a celebrity endorsement has ever negatively affected their view/opinion of a brand. Female 21–25-year-old respondents held the majority with 75% of that specific age group stating 'no' to a celebrity endorsement negatively affecting their view of a brand.

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Figure 16: Female response to 'If yes, under what circumstances would a celebrity influence your brand switch decision?

What is your age?	What is your gender?	Count of What is your age?	If yes to the previous question, under what circumstances would a
18-21	Female	1	attractive celeb/like their style
18-21	Female	1	I like the celebrity
18-21	Female	1	If I admire the celeb
18-21	Female	1	If I liked the celebritys style
18-21	Female	1	If I thought the celebrity had good style
18-21	Female	1	If I want to be like the celeb
18-21	Female	1	If the celebrity uses the product and is attractive
18-21	Female	1	Likeable celeb
18-21	Female	2	Popular celebrity
21-25	Female	1	fits the brand
21-25	Female	1	If I like the celeb
21-25	Female	1	If the celebrity is well liked and popular
21-25	Female	1	If the endorser displays good traits from using the product
21-25	Female	1	Inclusive celebrity endorsement
21-25	Female	1	Nice style
21-25	Female	1	Popular celebrity
21-25	Female	1	respected celeb
26-30	Female	1	Environment conscience celeb
26-30	Female	1	Favourite celebrity
26-30	Female	1	good style celeb
26-30	Female	1	If celebrity does a low number of endorsements
26-30	Female	1	If I like the celebrity
26-30	Female	1	Well respected
31-35	Female	1	If the celebrity used the product and I like the celeb
41-43	Female	1	like celeb
41-43	Female	1	Likeable trust celeb
41-43	Female	1	Well known trusted celebrity
Total		**28**	

Figure 16 displays the Female participants response to which circumstances a celebrity endorser would influence their brand switch decision.

Figure 17: Male response of 'If yes, under what circumstances would a celebrity influence your brand switch decision?'

What is your age?	What is your gender?	Count of What is your age?	If yes to the previous question, under what circumstances would a ...
18-21	Male	1	environment conscious celebrity
18-21	Male	1	Good style
18-21	Male	1	If celebrity is popular
18-21	Male	1	If I like the celebrity
18-21	Male	1	Popular
26-30	Male	1	celeb I admire or look up to
26-30	Male	1	Good style
26-30	Male	1	If the celebrity is respected
26-30	Male	1	Trustworthy celeb
31-35	Male	1	If I respected the celebrity I might consider
31-35	Male	1	If I saw a lot of trusted celebrities endorsing it
36-41	Male	1	If the celebrity has a good image/trustworthy
Total		**12**	

Figure 17 displays the Male participants response to under which circumstances a celebrity endorser would influence their brand switch decision.

Figure 18: If yes, which brand, and which specific elements made it so? (Follow up to the question: Has a celebrity endorsement ever positively affected your view/opinion of a brand?

What is your age?	What is your gender?	Count of What is your age?	If yes, which brand, and what specific elements made it so?
18-21	Female	1	Lucie donlan for Peng hair because she has nice hair and looks like she used the product
18-21	Female	1	Maya jama and pink gin, her fun vibe made me want to buy
18-21	Female	1	Molly mae partnership with pretty little thing made me think the brand was more high end than I previously thought
21-25	Female	1	Hair care brand had a female celebrity with very nice hair
21-25	Female	1	Molly Mae pretty little thing
21-25	Female	1	Pantene using blind inclusive model to endorse their shampoo
21-25	Female	1	Stylish celebrity
21-25	Female	1	Taylor swift Diet Coke endorsement, I like her and she's skinny
26-30	Female	1	Clothing brand partnered with a stylish celebrity, made the brand more stylish
26-30	Female	1	Harry rednapp betting ad
26-30	Female	1	Inclusive celeb
26-30	Female	1	Mulle yoghurts using Nicole sherzinger, made it more stylish and healthy as she's skinny
31-35	Female	1	Katy Perry adverts for JUST EAT funny and made brand look better
41-43	Female	1	Claudia Winkleman shampoo she has nice hair
41-43	Female	1	Gillian Anderson mattress advert, nice to see older woman representation
18-21	Male	1	Gary linekar and walkers
26-30	Male	1	Gary linkekar walkers
26-30	Male	1	Messi made Adidas more serious sports brand with his huge star power
31-35	Male	1	David Beckham adidas, he made it look more classy
31-35	Male	1	Roger Federer for gillette
Total		**20**	

Figure 18 displays the total participants response to which elements of a celebrity endorsement has positively affected their view/opinion of a brand.

Figure 19: **If yes , which brand, and which specific elements made it so/ (Follow up to the question: Has a celebrity endorsement ever negatively affected your view/opinion of a brand?**

What is your age?	What is your gender?	If yes, which brand, and what specific elements made it so? _1
18-21	Female	Big narstie in slimfast advert, because he is quite overweight it doesn't endorse the product well in my opinion
21-25	Female	Ed Sheeran endorsing his own hot sauce brand, doesn't fit image
21-25	Female	Travis Scott McDonalds, controversial due to the deaths at his concert
26-30	Female	Kendall jenner pepsi insensitive
31-35	Female	Kendall jenner for pepsi, insensitive topic
41-43	Female	OJ simpson and Hertz car rental, after the murder trial I associate murder with hertz
18-21	Male	Charlie sloth for au vodka, he made it seem tacky
26-30	Male	Celeb didn't fit style of brand
26-30	Male	Dylan mulvany and busdwiser, too political for a beer company using transgender politics
31-35	Male	Gillette making their toxic masculinity ad too political
31-35	Male	Tampax too political

Figure 19 displays the total participants response to which elements of a celebrity endorsement has negatively impacted their view/opinion of a brand.

Figure 20: Do you regard social media influencers as celebrities?

Count of What is your age? by What is your age?, What is your gender? and Do you regard social media influencers as celebrities?
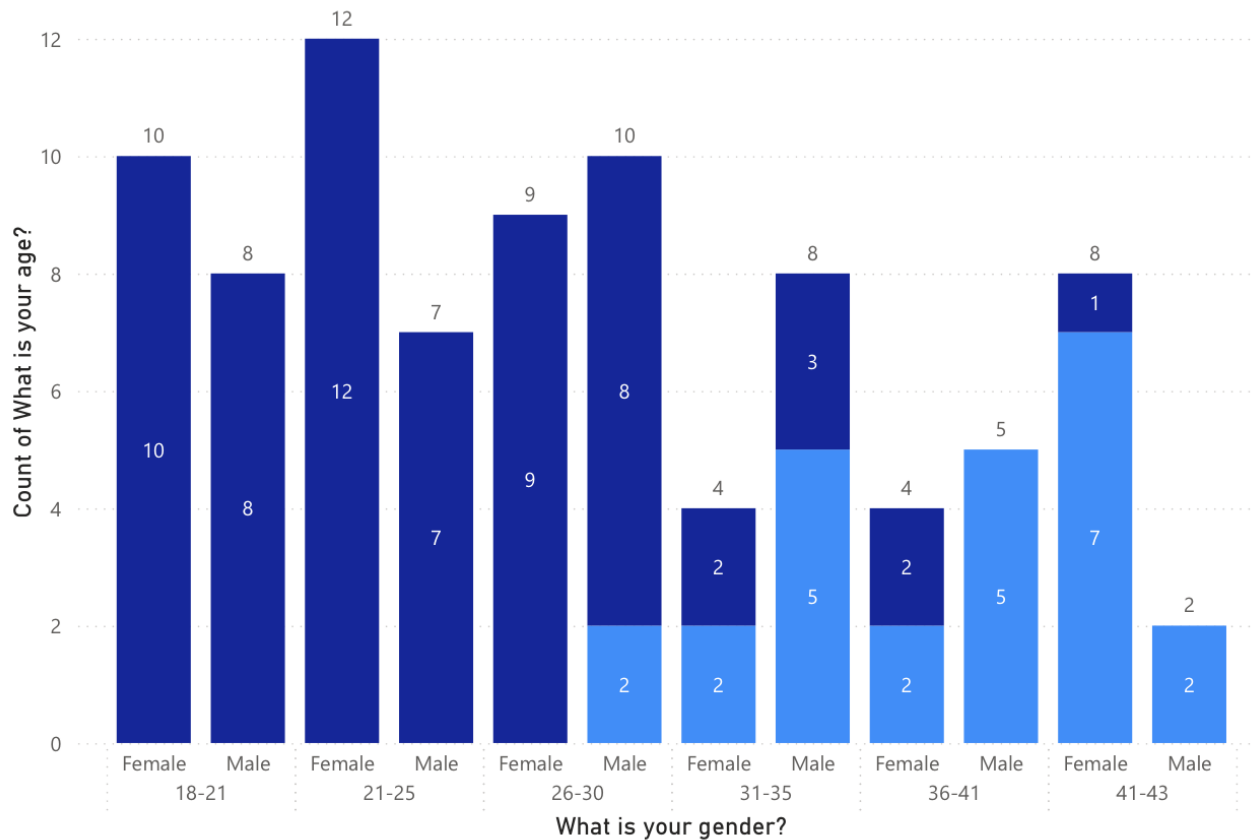
Do you regard social media infl... ● No ● Yes

Figure 20 displays the number of respondents who regard social media influencers as celebrities. 71% of the total number of respondents stated 'Yes' when asked whether they regard social media influencers as celebrities. 96% of age groups: 18-21, 21-25, 26-30 regard influencers as celebrities. 81% of the age groups 31-35, 36-41, 41-43 do not regard influencers as celebrities.

Figure 21: <u>Are you more likely to trust a product endorsement via social media endorsement/endorser?</u>
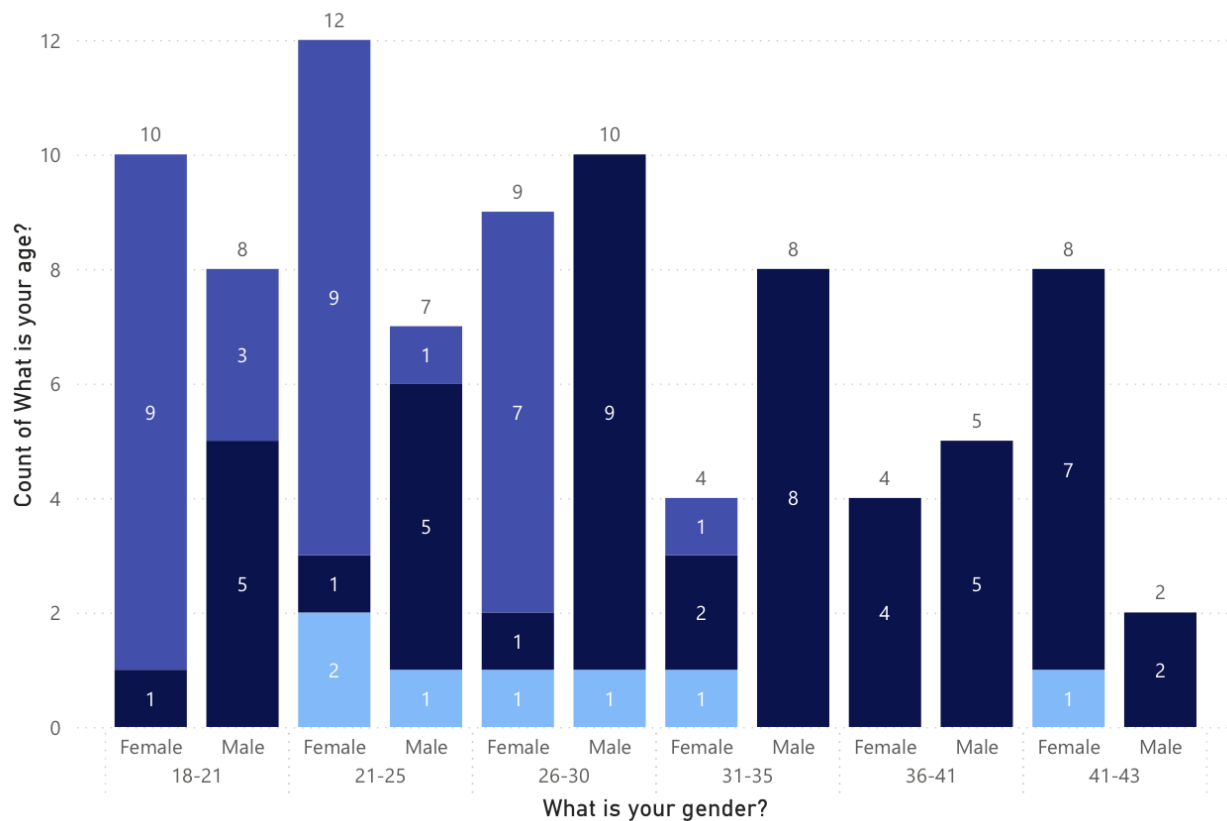
Figure 21 displays the number of respondents who would be more likely to trust a product endorsement via social media. 57% of total participants answered 'no' when asked, 52% of participants in age groups 18-30 answered 'yes'. 90% of age groups 31-43 answered 'no'.

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<u>Appendix B -Ethics Form</u>

St Mary's University

Ethics Sub-Committee

Application for Ethical Approval (Research)

This form must be completed by any undergraduate or postgraduate student, or member of staff at St Mary's University, who is undertaking research involving contact with, or observation of, human participants.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students should have the form reviewed and signed by their supervisor, and forwarded to the Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee representative. PhD/MPhil applications must also be reviewed and signed by an Ethics Representative. Staff applications should be forwarded directly to the Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee representative. All supporting documents should be merged into one document (in order of the checklist) and named in the following format: **'Full Name – Faculty – Supervisor'**

Please note that for all undergraduate and taught masters research projects the supervisor is considered to be the Principal Investigator for the study.

If the proposal has been submitted for approval to an external, properly constituted ethics committee (e.g. NHS Ethics), then please submit a copy of the application and approval letter to the Secretary of the Ethics Sub-Committee. Please note that you will also be required to complete the St Mary's Application for Ethical Approval.

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Before completing this form:

- Please refer to the **University's Ethical Guidelines**. As the researcher/ supervisor, you are responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgment in this review.
- Please refer to the Ethical Application System (Three Tiers) information sheet.
- Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Commonly Made Mistakes sheet.
- If you are conducting research with children or young people, please ensure that you read the **Guidelines for Conducting Research with Children or Young People**, and answer the below questions with reference to the guidelines.

Please note:

In line with University Academic Regulations the signed completed Ethics Form must be included as an appendix to the final research project.

If you have any queries when completing this document, please consult your supervisor (for students) or Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee representative (for staff).

St Mary's Ethics Application Checklist

The checklist below will help you to ensure that all the supporting documents are submitted with your ethics application form. The supporting documents are necessary for the Ethics Sub-Committee to be able to review and approve your application. Please note, if the appropriate documents are not submitted with the application form then the application will be returned directly to the applicant and may need to be re-submitted at a later date.

Document	Enclosed?*	Version No
1. Application Form	Mandatory	

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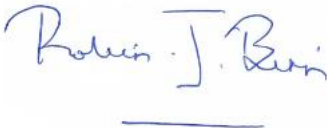
2. Participant Invitation Letter	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable	
3. Participant Information Sheet(s)	Mandatory	
4. Participant Consent Form(s)	Mandatory	
5. Parental Consent Form	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable	
6. Participant Recruitment Material - e.g. copies of posters, newspaper adverts, emails	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable	
7. Letter from host organisation (granting permission to conduct study on the premises)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable	
8. Research instrument, e.g. validated questionnaire, survey, interview schedule	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable	
9. DBS certificate available (original to be presented separately from this application)*	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable	
10. Other Research Ethics Committee application (e.g. NHS REC form)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable	
11. Certificates of training (required if storing human tissue)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable	

I can confirm that all relevant documents are included in order of the list and in one document (any DBS check to be sent separately) named in the following format:

'Full Name - Faculty – Supervisor'

Signature of Proposer:		Date:	
Signature of Supervisor		Date:	

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(for student research projects):	Robin. J. Birn		01/03/24

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Ethics Application Form

1. Name of proposer(s)	Sophie O'Leary
2. St Mary's email address	198610@live.stmarys.ac.uk
3. Name of supervisor	Robin Birn
4. Title of project	Understanding celebrity endorsement's effect on consumer behaviour

5. Faculty or Service	☒ Business, Law & Society ☐ Institute of Education ☐ SAHPS ☐ Theology & Liberal Arts
6. Programme	☒ UG ☐ PG (taught) ☐ PG (research) Name of programme: Sports communication and marketing
7. Type of activity	☐ Staff ☒ UG student ☐ PG student ☐ Visiting ☐ Associate

8. Confidentiality	
Will all information remain confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 2018?	☒ Yes ☐ No
9. Consent	

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Will written informed consent be obtained from all participants/participants' representatives?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
10. Pre-approved Protocol	
Has the protocol been approved by the Ethics Sub-Committee under a generic application?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable Date of approval:
11. Approval from another Ethics Committee	
a) Will the research require approval by an ethics committee external to St Mary's University?	☐ Yes ☒ No
b) Are you working with persons under 18 years of age or vulnerable adults?	☐ Yes ☒ No

12. Identifiable risks	
a) Is there significant potential for physical or psychological discomfort, harm, stress or burden to participants?	☐Yes ☒ No
b) Are participants over 65 years of age?	☐Yes ☒ No
c) Do participants have limited ability to give voluntary consent? This could include cognitively impaired persons, prisoners, persons with a chronic physical or mental condition, or those who live in or are connected to an institutional environment.	☐Yes ☒ No
d) Are any invasive techniques involved? And/or the collection of body fluids or tissue?	☐Yes ☒ No
e) Is an extensive degree of exercise or physical exertion involved?	☐Yes ☒ No
f) Is there manipulation of cognitive or affective human responses which could cause stress or anxiety?	☐Yes ☒ No
g) Are drugs or other substances (including liquid and food additives) to be administered?	☐Yes ☒ No
h) Will deception of participants be used in a way which might cause distress, or might reasonably affect their willingness to participate in the research? For example,	☐Yes ☒ No

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	misleading participants on the purpose of the research, by giving them false information.	
i)	Will highly personal, intimate or other private and confidential information be sought? For example sexual preferences.	☐Yes ☒ No
j)	Will payment be made to participants? This can include costs for expenses or time.	☐Yes ☒ No If yes, provide details:
k)	Could the relationship between the researcher/ supervisor and the participant be such that a participant might feel pressurised to take part?	☐Yes ☒ No
l)	Are you working under the remit of the Human Tissue Act 2004?	☐Yes ☒ No
m)	Do you have an approved risk assessment form relating to this research?	☐Yes ☒ No

13. Proposed start and completion date
Please indicate: • When the study is due to commence. • Timetable for data collection. • The expected date of completion. Please ensure that your start date is at least five weeks after the submission deadline for the Ethics Sub-Committee meeting.
• The study is due to commence on 10/04/2024 • Data to be collected on 20/04/2024 after sending out 3 reminders via social media • The expected date of completion is 10/05/2024

14. Sponsors/collaborators
Please give names and details of sponsors or collaborators on the project. This does not include your supervisor(s) or St Mary's University. • Sponsor: An individual or organisation who provides financial resources or some other support for a project. • Collaborator: An individual or organisation who works on the project as a recognised contributor by providing advice, data or another form of support.

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University
Twickenham
London

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N/A

15. Other Research Ethics Committee Approval
Please indicate: • Whether additional approval is required or has already been obtained (e.g. an NHS Research Ethics Committee). • Whether approval has previously been given for any element of this research by the University Ethics Sub-Committee. Please also note which code of practice / professional body you have consulted for your project.
N/A

16. Purpose of the study
In lay language, please provide a brief introduction to the background and rationale for your study. *[100 word limit]*
This study is being conducted to assess and analyse the success levels of celebrity endorsement in relation to consumer behaviour and decision making. The study aims to find out which factors are effective when it comes to celebrity endorsement, and the key characteristics that either go towards a successful or unsuccessful celebrity partnership.

17. Study design/methodology
In lay language, please provide details of: a) The design of the study (qualitative/quantitative questionnaires etc.) b) The proposed methods of data collection (what you will do, how you will do this and the nature of tests). c) The requirement of the participant i.e. the extent of their commitment and the length of time they will be required to attend testing. d) Details of where the research/testing will take place, including country. e) Please state whether the materials/procedures you are using are original, or the intellectual property of a third party. If the materials/procedures are original, please describe any pre-testing you have done or will do to ensure that they are effective.
a) The study will be in the form of a quantitative survey

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b) A survey will be sent out via email and social media to my target group
c) Participant will only need 2-3 minutes to complete survey
d) St Marys University, Twickenham. United Kingdom
e) The survey will be via Google Forms, no pre testing will take place, the form will be sent to the target demographic

---

18. Participants

Please mention:
a) The number of participants you are recruiting and why. For example, because of their specific age or sex.
b) How they will be recruited and chosen.
c) The inclusion/exclusion criteria.
d) For internet studies please clarify how you will verify the age of the participants.
e) If the research is taking place in a school or organisation then please include their written agreement for the research to be undertaken.
f) Please state any connection you may have with any organisation you are recruiting from, for example, employment.

a)I will be aiming to recruit a target of 100-150 Gen Z and Millennial aged individuals
b)The survey will be sent out to as many potential participants as possible, with the age range on the survey only 18-43 to ensure the correct target demographic
c) The ideal respondent consumes media and is interested in endorsement, aged from 18-43 years of age (Millennial and Gen Z target demographic)
d)The verification of the age of the participants will be issued at the beginning of the survey, where it will state the requirement for participation in the study
e)N/A
f) N/A

---

19. Consent

If you have any exclusion criteria, please ensure that your Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet clearly makes participants aware that their data may or may not be used.
a) Are there any incentives/pressures which may make it difficult for participants to refuse to take part? If so, explain and clarify why this needs to be done.
b) Will any of the participants be from any of the following groups?

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> ➢ Children under 18
> ➢ Participants with learning disabilities
> ➢ Participants suffering from dementia
> ➢ Other vulnerable groups.
>
> If any of the above apply, state whether the researcher/investigator holds a current DBS certificate (undertaken within the last 3 years). A copy of the DBS must be supplied **separately from** the application.

c) Provide details on how consent will be obtained. This includes consent from all necessary persons i.e. participants and parents.

N/A

20. Risks and benefits of research/activity

a) Are there any potential risks or adverse effects (e.g. injury, pain, discomfort, distress, changes to lifestyle) associated with this study? If so please provide details, including information on how these will be minimised.

b) Please explain where the risks / effects may arise from (and why), so that it is clear why the risks / effects will be difficult to completely eliminate or minimise.

c) Does the study involve any invasive procedures? If so, please confirm that the researchers or collaborators have appropriate training and are competent to deliver these procedures. Please note that invasive procedures also include the use of deceptive procedures in order to obtain information.

d) Will individual/group interviews/questionnaires include anything that may be sensitive or upsetting? If so, please clarify why this information is necessary (and if applicable, any prior use of the questionnaire/interview).

e) Please describe how you would deal with any adverse reactions participants might experience. Discuss any adverse reaction that might occur and the actions that will be taken in response by you, your supervisor or some third party (explain why a third party is being used for this purpose).

f) Are there any benefits to the participant or for the organisation taking part in the research?

N/A

21. Confidentiality, privacy and data protection

- Outline what steps will be taken to ensure participants' confidentiality.
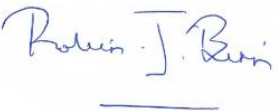
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- Describe how data, particularly personal information, will be stored (please state that all electronic data will be stored on St Mary's University servers).
- If there is a possibility of publication, please state that you will keep the data for a period of 10 years.
- Consider how you will identify participants who request their data be withdrawn, such that you can still maintain the confidentiality of theirs and others' data.
- Describe how you will manage data using a data a management plan.
- You should show how you plan to store the data securely and select the data that will be made publically available once the project has ended.
- You should also show how you will take account of the relevant legislation including that relating to data protection, freedom of information and intellectual property.
- Identify all persons who will have access to the data (normally yourself and your supervisor).
- Will the data results include information which may identify people or places?
- Explain what information will be identifiable.
- Whether the persons or places (e.g. organisations) are aware of this.
- Consent forms should state what information will be identifiable and any likely outputs which will use the information e.g. dissertations, theses and any future publications/presentations.

a) Participants personal information such as name or address will not be recorded in the survey and their answers will remain anonymous, as well as the files being stored behind password locked servers

b) All electronic data will be stored on St Mary's University servers

c) N/A

d) Participants who wish to withdraw will have the research team contact details to request withdrawal from the study

e) Qualitive data will be transferred onto a spreadsheet, where it will be visualised so that others can understand the data in a concise way

f) The data will be stored in a spreadsheet under a password locked account on the St Mary's University servers, the data that will be selected to be made public will be the relevant data to the aim of the study

g) The only people who will have access to the data will me and my supervisor (Robin Birn)

h) The data will not include results which may identify people or places

i)

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22. Feedback to participants
Please give details of how feedback will be given to participants: • As a minimum, it would normally be expected for feedback to be offered to participants in an acceptable format, e.g. a summary of findings appropriately written. • Please state whether you intend to provide feedback to any other individual(s) or organisation(s) and what form this would take.
Participants will be given the contact details of the research team if they wish to request the details and results of their participation. This will be in the form of a document stating the key findings.

The proposer recognises their responsibility in carrying out the project in accordance with the University's Ethical Guidelines and will ensure that any person(s) assisting in the research/ teaching are also bound by these. The Ethics Sub-Committee must be notified of, and approve, any deviation from the information provided on this form.

Name of Proposer:	Sophie O'Leary		
Signature of Proposer:	*Sophie O'Leary*	Date:	13/02/2024
Name of Supervisor (for student research projects):	Robin J Birn		
Signature of Supervisor:	*Robin J Birn*	Date:	01/03/24

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Approval Sheet

(This sheet must be signed at all relevant boxes)
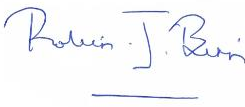
Name of proposer(s)	
Name of supervisor(s)	Robin J Birn
Programme of study	
Title of project	

Supervisors, please complete section 1. If approved at level 1, please forward a copy of this Approval Sheet to the Faculty Ethics Representative for their records.

SECTION 1: To be completed by supervisor.(for student research projects). PhD/MPhil applications must be referred to and reviewed by an Ethics Representative at Section 2 below.

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☐ Approved at Level 1.			
☐ Refer to Ethics Representative for consideration.			
Name of Supervisor:	Robin J Birn		
Signature of Supervisor:	*Robin J Birn*	Date:	01/03/2024

SECTION 2: To be completed by Ethics Representative.			
☐ Approved at Level 1			
☐ Approved at Level 2			
☐ Level 3 consideration is required by Ethics Sub-Committee.			
Name of Faculty Ethics Representative:			
Signature of Faculty Ethics Representative:		Date:	

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<u>Appendix C – Questionnaire</u>

The effects of celebrity endorsement on consumer behaviour

You are being invited to participate in this research study of celebrity endorsement on millennial and gen consumer behaviour. I am interested in finding out about your views on celebrity endorsers and which factors are important to you. Your participation in this study will require the completion and submission of the following survey.

Due to the target range being 'Generation Z' and Millennial, this survey is only open to those aged between 18 and 43.

Thank you for your participation.

Your responses will only be used in a statistical analysis, you will not be identified as a respondent.

Contact details: 198610@live.stmarys.ac.uk
What is your age?
*
What is your gender?
*
How often do you see celebrity endorsements?
*
When a celebrity you admire endorses a product, are you more likely to consider trying it?
*
Can you typically recall the brand being advertised when you see a celebrity endorsement, regardless of your personal opinion of the celebrity or product?
*
How often do you see celebrity endorsers within these sectors?
*

<div align="center">
Multiple times a day
Every day
Every other day
Once a week
Less than once a week
</div>

Health/Beauty
Sports
Entertainment/ Television
Food/ Drink

What gender do you typically see endorsing in the following sectors?

<div align="center">
Male
</div>

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Female

Health/Beauty
Sports
Entertainment/ Television
Food/Drink

Which media platform do you use most regularly?
*

Short answer text

Which media platform do you usually see the most celebrity endorsements on?
*

Short answer text

How important is trustworthiness as a quality in a celebrity endorser?
*

Not important at all

1
2
3
4
5

Very important

How important is likeability as a quality in a celebrity endorser?
*

Not important at all

1
2
3
4
5

Very important

How important is product expertise as a quality in a celebrity endorser?
*

Not important at all

1
2
3
4
5

Very important

How important is relatability as a quality in a celebrity endorser?
*

Not important at all

1

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2

3

4

5

<div align="center">Very important</div>

How important is attractiveness as a quality in the celebrity endorser?
*

<div align="center">Not important at all</div>

1

2

3

4

5

<div align="center">Very important</div>

How important is it for a celebrity to align with the brands image and values?
*

<div align="center">Not important at all</div>

1

2

3

4

5

<div align="center">Very important</div>

Are you more likely to buy a beauty product if the celebrity endorser is attractive?
*

How believable and trustworthy do you find celebrity endorsements in general? (Not trustworthy = 1, Trustworthy = 10
*

<div align="center">Not trustworthy/ believable</div>

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

<div align="center">Very trustworthy/ believable</div>

Would a successful celebrity endorsement be enough to convince you to switch brands from your current favourite?

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*

If yes to the previous question, under what circumstances would a celebrity influence your brand switch decision?

Long answer text

Has a celebrity endorsement ever positively affected your view of a brand?

*

If yes, which brand, and what specific elements made it so?

Long answer text

Has a celebrity endorsement ever negatively affected your view of a brand?

*

If yes, which brand, and what specific elements made it so?

Long answer text

How important is it that the celebrity uses the product themselves in order for you to trust their endorsement? (1- Very important, 5- Not at all important

*

	Not important at all
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
	Very important

Do you regard social media influencers as celebrities?

*

Are you more likely to trust a product endorsement via social media/ by a social media influencer?

*